

THE
P R I N C I P L E S
OF THE
CHRISTIAN FAITH.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

Newly translated from the FRENCH.

VOL. I.

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THIS Work contains the most numerous Evidences of the Truth of Religion in general, and of the Christian Faith in particular, that ever were put together into one Book. The Author's Arguments are plain and easy; and the Force of his Reasoning is irresistible. His Composition is natural, elegant and masterly; and, by an uncommon Felicity of Genius, he has adapted his Writings, at once, to Persons of the purest Taste, and to the meanest Readers. It is also his peculiar Excellency, to treat of his Subject in a Manner highly entertaining and delightful: And, upon the whole, by a vast Variety of moral and devout Reflexions interspersed thro' the Work, he hath shewed himself endowed with Talents equally formed to improve the Judgment and to edify the Heart.

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THIS Work, written originally in French, was composed about twenty five years ago, by an Author, whose modest dispositions, tho' his name would certainly have been an honour and advantage to the book, did not allow it to be prefixed.

The solid and convincing arguments with which our Author attacks the Free-thinker in every quarter, and the satisfying and explicit evidences he has produced of the truth of Revelation in general, and of the Christian Faith in particular, made some learned men, who had access to peruse the Work in manuscript, earnestly wish for its publication: it is therefore judged superfluous to say any thing here in favour of it; to every judicious reader it will sufficiently, it is hoped, recommend itself.

Accordingly, in 1747, it was published at *Paris* in the original language; and, in 1749, a translation of it into English, in which were abundance of errors, both
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in the stile, and with regard to the sense of the Original, was published at London.

In this Edition care has been taken to correct these; and some chapters are so much reformed and new-modelled, that it may with justice and propriety be called a new translation.

Throughout the whole, the Author's division of his Work into Parts, Chapters and Articles, is exactly adhered to (which is not the case in the translation above mentioned); and, at the end of Vol. II. are subjoined the heads or titles of several chapters, which, by reason of the Author's untimely death, were left unfinished.

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TREATISE

of the PRINCIPLES of the

CHRISTIAN FAITH.

PART I.

Of the motives to a serious study of the principles of the christian faith; and of the manner of conducting this study.

CHAPTER I.

What is understood by faith and its relations. A christian ought to be solidly instructed in religion. He ought to know its foundations, proofs, antiquity, and true characteristics, to a certain point. With what dispositions he ought to undertake this inquiry.

ART. I.

What is understood by faith and its relations.

THE christian faith is the source of that true worship which men owe to God; that is to say, of religion, which hath two relations; one to God, whom it adores, another to the creature, by whom this God

is adored. 'Tis infinite, on the side of its object; on that of the creature, it is limited : but within these very limits it includes another kind of infinity ; as the adoration, which the creature renders to God, is limited only by its impotence, not by its desires ; and as it would be immense, were only the being of the creature so.

II. This adoration is not a simple acknowledgement that God is all, and that the creature is nothing ; but what it pleases him, it should be. 'Tis not a simple admiration of his infinite perfections ; nor even a simple respectful and submissive trembling before the supreme Majesty : all these make indeed a part of it ; but they neither give a compleat and entire idea of it, nor do they comprehend all the duties it includes. Its essence consists principally in subjecting the intelligent creature to God, as to its God, as to its sovereign good, as to its only end, as to the principle on which it wholly depends, and as to the center to which all it hath received ought to return.

III. Religion, to which such an adoration is essential, is then an intercourse between God and man. It unites those two extremities, which an infinite distance seems to separate. It teaches man, and makes him feel, what God is with relation to him ; as also, what *he* is with relation to God ; what he owes to, and may hope for from him.

IV. It teaches man, that the worship due to God, as truth essential, is to believe him when he speaks, and to confide in him when he promises ; that man cannot adore him as sovereign justice and primitive sanctity, but by doing what he commands, and abstaining from what he forbids ; that the homage due to his infinite goodness, is love, which were, if possible, infinite, and which filled at least the whole extent of his will ; and that the design God hath in being the limit and end of man, cannot be fully accomplished, but by a total resemblance of man to him.

A R T.

of the CHRISTIAN FAITH.

A R T. II.

A Christian ought to be solidly instructed in religion.

I. **A**LL the duties and all the interests of man, are found to be comprehended in what I have been saying; and by consequence it is evident, that there is neither any interest, nor any duty more essential than that of being well instructed in religion, which alone can teach what it hath pleased God to reveal, to promise, to command, and forbid; which alone contains and preserves the depositary of salutary truths; which alone is provided with the means by which man may return to God; which alone can comfort, support, and conduct him to the goal; and which alone can discover to him what he is himself, what other beings are, and what use he ought to make of them.

II. 'Tis religion alone, which can point out to man his place in the universe, and can fix him immediately under God, equal to spirits, superior to bodies: 'Tis it alone, which can place him in that point of sight, from whence he ought to view all things, in order to judge rightly of them, and know their destination and their just value. 'Tis it alone which can make him enter into the design God hath had in giving him being, and in making the world for him.

III. Without this faithful guide, which ought to accompany him in all his steps, man lives at random. He knows neither his rank nor his duties, nor the true use of any creature; dashes against every thing in his way; stops and catches at every thing; treads in a perpetual labyrinth; returns continually in his own steps, without finding any end; and is even ignorant if there be any.

IV. He follows blindly the impression of his senses; is moved by present objects alone; distrusts the reality of every thing that is invisible, and cannot regard as his good, that, whose enjoyment is delayed, and for which he must wait for some while.

A TREATISE of the PRINCIPLES

V. His actual indigence presses and determines him to seize whatever offers itself to him. His restless and impatient hunger renders delays unsupportable; and makes all things, that have any relation to his immediate wants, appear as solid goods: and experience, which makes him feel those wants, disgusts without undeceiving, and afflicts without converting him.

VI. His passions, which arise from, serve in their turn to increase, his ignorance. After having followed with some resistance, he surrenders himself to them with less remorse, attempts to justify them, and desires that they may be permitted, or at least may remain unpunished. He fears to examine to the bottom of these his inward feelings, that condemn them. Them therefore he stifles, as much as he can, by distraction and by other cares; and wishes in secret, that religion, which is agreeable to those inward feelings, were less certain than it is said to be.

VII. He already knows, a little, its depth and grandeur: but begins to neglect it on design. He considers only certain externals, that are often foreign to, and disfigure religion. He attaches himself to certain parts, which are detached from the whole, of which he sees neither the connexion nor the relations. He busies himself with difficulties, without having enough of light to resolve them: would reason where he ought to believe, and knows not to reason where it would be allowed him to do so with advantage: he contents himself with the most frivolous conjectures, and distrusts the most solid proofs.

VIII. Such perverseness is commonly punished by a new blindness: we cease to see what we do not like, and light is justly refused him who is an enemy to it. This light did not proceed from reason alone; it had a source more free and independent; and the most severe chastisement, with which God punishes men, is, when he suffers them to remain at ease and tranquillity amidst their darkness, according to that saying of the Holy Spirit * *He which is filthy, let him be filthy still.*

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* Rev. xx ii. 11.

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IX. Such a permission ought to terrify all those who see its frightful consequences. * *Hide not thy commandments from me, said the prophet to God, O let me not wander from thy commandments.* He understood the interest he had in being submissive and faithful. He knew that his virtue was a gift, and his obedience a grace; and was sensibly touched with this truth, that God is so great, and that it is so great a blessing to be well instructed in what he wills, and to be submissive to it, that he never punishes more severely, than by permitting men to be ignorant of, and to despise his will.

X. The study of religion is a continual study of his will; for this reason man cannot be too well instructed in it. But we ought to beware, never to mix with this study, either curiosity, a desire of distinction, or any motive unworthy of it: for it ought to heal all the passions, instead of contributing to cherish them; and the first lesson we ought to learn from it is, that nothing is more opposite to it, than a curious and barren enquiry, and a secret pride which turns all into humour.

XI. The manner in which religion is studied, ought to be serious, profound, and proportioned to the great things religion discovers. The spirit must be humbled and the heart softened by it. Such knowledge must lead to fighting, not to vanity. We ought to be abashed at seeing what small proportion there is between that which we owe to God, and what we pay him; between his sanctity and the imperfection of our works; between his benefits and our acknowledgements; between his promises and our desires.

XII. 'Tis also necessary, that the manner of studying religion be full and entire. Hence men must not attach themselves to one part, and neglect all the rest. They must not separate truths that enlighten the understanding, from rules which ought to reform the morals. They ought not to dive into mysteries, and give but little attention to important maxims. They ought not to rest on the promises alone, without considering all which is capable of inspiring a salutary fear. They ought not to content themselves with remarking what is

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* Psal. cxix. 19.

agreeable to inclination and costs little: but they ought to stop and insist upon all those duties, which appear most difficult, and are commonly more indispensable.

A R T. III.

A Christian ought to know, to a certain point, the truths, foundations, and true characteristics of religion.

I. **T**IS impossible for a christian to study religion seriously, and not discover proofs without number which demonstrate its truth. These proofs don't make him a faithful believer: he was so before he discovered them. Faith is the gift of God, not the fruit of human thoughts: It had been given him in baptism by a grace very different from a mere natural persuasion: and nothing can supply the place of this secret operation of the spirit of God, which subjects the reason and will of man to revelation.

II. But what does not serve to establish faith, serves to defend and preserve it. The proofs of religion supply the place of an external rampart: they prevent doubts which might arise: by a ready light they dissipate those which do. They hinder the impression which the doubts of others might make.

III. These proofs do also another good: they shew how reasonable faith is; that is, how agreeable it is to reason to submit to faith: and as nothing costs the mind of man, which desires to see and to judge, so much as to assent to what it cannot see, and submit to what it is forbidden to examine; there is nothing, which, next to inward grace, is more capable of making the yoke of faith easy and agreeable, than to make it understand, that it is by light it believes, and by using reason aright, that it ceases to consult it, and to constitute it as judge.

IV. Men don't see what they believe; but when well instructed in the proofs of religion, they see clearly that they ought to believe it. Right reason then conducts to revelation, of which it discovers the necessity

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and surety. 'Tis it which takes man as it were by the hand, and introduces him into the sanctuary; while itself stops at the vestibule. It speaks to him thus far; but after having made him have faith in religion, it holds itself in admiration and silence. Hear, says it to him, a master who is my superior: and my last advice is, that you listen to him alone, and consult me no more. 'Tis thus, by my own order that you desert me, and it is my light which conducts you to another. 'Tis just that I know whether it is God who reveals to us his will and his mysteries; but it would be the height of folly to wish to dive to the bottom, and fully to comprehend all which he reveals to us. I ought to believe none but him; and to have faith in his truth alone: so soon as I am certain that it is he who speaks, I have nothing to do but to hear and be silent. If he tells me things which surpass my comprehension, I have no difficulty to submit to them; because I know that my own light is limited, and that he who tells me these incomprehensibles, is infallible. I should even be astonished, did I comprehend all which he wills to discover to me; for there must be as great a distance between his thoughts and mine, as there is between his being and mine. He is infinite in wisdom, as in every other perfection: I only enjoy a feeble ray, for which I depend on him; and which he hath not given me to judge him, but to conduct myself.

V. Nothing is more sensible and rational than such a discourse: and it is evident, that did men listen to reason, the faith of the most incomprehensible mysteries, should not only contain nothing repugnant to it; but their profundity would on this very account bear a stamp of divinity that would help to subject it. 'Tis true, that first of all, reason must inform itself of the certainty of revelation; for indeed it will blindfold itself only for God; and consents to sacrifice its own light, only to him from whom it has this light.

A TREATISE of the PRINCIPLES

A R T. IV.

In what dispositions he ought to examine the proofs of religion.

REASON then examines before it believes, in order to examine no more when it shall have believed: but its examination does not extend to those things which are revealed. It stops at the proofs of revelation, and goes no farther.

II. 'Tis necessary however to remark, that reason makes this examination in two very different manners, according to the different situations in which it finds itself. Before it has become faithful, its examination is mixed with doubt and distrust; it regards this examination as necessary, and stands in need of it to satisfy and convince itself.

III. But when it is already become faithful, and grace has dispensed with all further reflexions, and further researches, by giving it faith in a compendious way in baptism, and the unity of the Catholic church; what examination it makes of the proofs of religion, appears to it useful, but not absolutely necessary. It has no need of such an examination in order to strengthen its faith; but only to know better the value of that which it hath: it seeks its consolation, not the resolution of its doubts; and it does not make its faith depend on the success of its reflexions.

IV. 'Tis with such dispositions a christian ought to study the proofs of religion, which, tho' they be demonstrations, are always beneath the gift of God, and inferior to faith. He is arrived already at the goal, and goes no farther in order to arrive at it: but from the goal at which he is arrived, he considers that all the lights terminate there; and that, if he were not there already, every path would lead him to it.

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CHAP. II.

Tis of importance to know well the interest which man hath in religion.—It is not opposite to his essential desires.—On the contrary it exhorts him to examine these desires in order to discern their true object.—It lays no other commands on him than to be happy; and only forbids him to be miserable.—The commandment to love ourselves, included in that of loving God with all our heart.—The error in taking our passions for ourselves.—An effectual remedy taught by religion, viz. to ask of God, that he would make himself be more sensibly felt than other enjoyments.

ART. I.

Tis of importance to know well the interest which man hath in religion.

I. **O**UR design in making an abridgment of the proofs of religion, is to inspire christians with a new respect for it, by shewing them how firm are its foundations, and how all its parts are connected together and depend on one another; and to caution them against the discourses and bad examples of those who might have less light.

II. These proofs, as I have said already, are not the origin, beginning, source or principle of faith: but they are its protection and defence. They are to it, what a breastplate is to the heart; which tho' it be not the cause, preserves the motion and life of the heart. They remove temptation at a distance, and are a remedy for it; and help to preserve in the Christian an humble and docile spirit, in the midst of an age, in which infidelity of spirit, of mind and of heart, becomes the ordinary chastisement of the infidelity of a criminal life.

III. However, it must be confessed, that mere respect for religion is not sufficient to lead to the pursuit of its rules, and that a Christian may be fully persuaded of its truth, without taking much interest in being greatly affected by it.

IV. 'Tis the heart which is the true bond. * The thoughts don't really unite man to religion; and faith, separate from love, either makes him not act at all, or makes him act with sadness, by employing fear, which afflicts instead of comforting.

V. That which moves the heart, is happiness or the hope of happiness. It contracts and shuts up itself, so soon as this hope is taken away from it. On the contrary, it opens and enlarges itself so soon as happiness is promised to it. And it is a way, almost sure, to overcome its every reluctance, to make it sensible that its interest and its good require it should surmount them all.

VI. It is incapable of sacrificing a love and a desire for nothing but mere loss. † It wishes to love, and cannot help loving. It will therefore ever be impossible to bring it not to do so; but it is very capable of renouncing a love which does not render it happy, to receive another which will constitute its happiness. Instead then of menacing, it is necessary to invite it by something, which is worth more than that which it hath at present. 'Tis good which it seeks after; and the greatest is that which it will prefer, provided it can be made to understand it.

VII. People usually represent religion to it as opposite to all its desires, and as an enemy to its liberty. They make it imagine that religion forbids it every thing. They say to it, that religion would make it a slave and wretched, and that it regards its violent inclination

* *Mores nostri, non ex eo quod quisque novit, sed eo quod quisque diligit, judicari solent. Nec faciunt bonos vel malos mores, nisi boni vel mali amores. S. Aug. ep. 155. ad Macedon. n. 13.*

† *Num vobis dicitur, nihil amatis? absit. Pigri, mortui, detestandi, miseri eritis si nihil amatis; amate, sed quid amatis videte. S. Aug. enarr. 2. in Ps. 32. n. 5.*

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clination for happiness as a passion which it ought to reform.

VIII. This language intimidates and frightens the heart: it thinks there is not only hardness, but impossibility in it. It believes that people want to destroy and to annihilate it: and it regards religion in no other light, than as a yoke which would crush it, and would deprive it of all respiration.

ART. II.

It is not opposite to his essential desires: on the contrary, it exhorts him to examine these desires in order to discern their true object.

I. **T**IS highly injurious to represent religion as a thing so different from what it really is; and to establish in the heart an hatred at it, instead of that love, of which it is so worthy.

II. Not only is it not opposite to the essential desires of man, but its design is to fill and to satisfy them. * It exhorts man to examine these desires well, to know well their root and their extent; and to convince himself by this examination, that they have an object which is immense.

III. † It comes to teach him his true greatness, and to make him ashamed that he does not perceive it in the elevation and extent of his heart. It comes to inflame his desire of being happy, by giving him a solid hope of being yet more so than he desires. It comes to deliver him from that unworthy servitude into which his senses have reduced him, by making him sensible how much he is superior to those frivolous goods with which they amuse him.

IV.

* *Purga amorem tuum; aquam fluentem in cloacam, converte ad hortum. S. Aug. enarr. 2. in Ps. 31. n. 5.*

† *Vis nosse qualis amor sit? vide quo ducat: non monemus ut nihil ametis; sed monemus ne mundum ametis. S. Aug. enarr. in Ps. 121. n. 1.*

IV. * You are seeking, says it to him, happiness, and in so doing you do well; only seek it in that place where it is. You would find here goods, which you pursue blindly, without reflecting that they can never exist in the place of your exile. Don't you desire immortality? Why then do you content yourself with a life which endures but for a few moments? don't you wish to be always tranquil? And can you be so here? Don't you feel within you a strong inclination for glory? Why then do you confine it to a thing so vain, as the esteem of a few men, if it is indeed true that they do esteem you †? Don't you find by experience, that you have within your breast an ardent thirst after all goods? How then have you the meanness to reduce yourself to that wretched partition, which your seducers and your enemies make you?

V. † What pleasure do you take in fatiguing yourself in difficult routs, and in pursuing in steep and dangerous grounds, a shadow of felicity, which flies continually before you, and escapes when you think to have caught it? The road to true bliss is less painful than those paths, in which you expose your life: || tread then in it with peace: breathe and take time to breathe in it. I will support you: I will conduct you safely to the goal: I will not leave you, till I shall have had the comfort to see you enter into the joy of your Lord and your Master.

A R T.

* Non est requies, ubi quaeritis eam. Quaerite quod quaeritis: sed ibi non est ubi quaeritis. Beatam vitam quaeritis in regione umbrae mortis; non est illic. S. Aug. lib. 4. Conf. cap. 12.

† Otortuosas vias! vae animae audaci, quae speravit, si a te recessisset, se aliquid melius habituram. Versa et reversa in tergum, et in latera, et in ventrem, et dura sunt omnia, et tu solus requies. S. Aug. lib. 6. Conf. cap. 16.

|| Quo itis in aspera, quo itis? quo vobis adhuc et adhuc ambulare vias difficiles et laboriosas? S. Aug. lib. 4. Conf. cap. 12.

|| Ostendis. (Deus) quam magnam creaturam rationalem feceris, qui nullo modo sufficit ad beatam vitam quicquid te mī-

est, ac per hoc nec ipsa sibi. S. Aug. lib. 13. Conf. cap. 9.

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VOL. I

A R T. III.

It lays no other commands on him, than to be happy, and forbids him only to be miserable.

I. **B**EHOLD the language of religion; behold how it is an enemy to our bliss and our liberty! It alone knows the true interests of man; and it alone is affected with them. Every thing else deceives him, except it: every thing else renders him unhappy. There is nothing on earth but it, which stretches forth the hand to him: and far from putting any obstacle in the way of his felicity; it commands him only to be happy; it forbids him only to be miserable.

II. We may, in effect, reduce all the precepts of the Christian religion to these two points: for 'tis always with regard to the interest of man, that it either commands or forbids him to do any thing. I know that the interest of man terminates, ultimately, in the glory of God: but these two things are not, in reality, different: for the greatest interest of man is found in the greatest glory of God.

III. Let us examine all his laws: they always regard us, always regard our good. He says to us, in some of them, *Do this, and you shall be happy*: and, in others, *Don't do that, because you should be miserable*.

IV. If God either were not our supreme good, or if he could be the supreme good of the unjust; he would neither command us to love himself alone, nor would he punish our injustice by refusing himself to us.

V. But he alone can make us happy: and it is not just, that he render happy those, who love him not: from thence came all the laws, which he imposes on us. And these laws, as is evident, lay no other commands on us than such as are essential to our happiness; and forbid us no other than such things as would be obstacles to it.

A R T. IV.

The commandment to love oursel-ves included in the first.

I. **T**HIS is so true, that God hath given to man no other rules for loving himself, than the first commandment, in which God requires all from him *. 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God,' saith he to him, 'with *all* thy heart, and with *all* thy soul, and with *all* thy mind, and with *all* thy strength: this is the first commandment.' And behold the second, which is like unto the first; 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: there is none other commandment greater than those.'

II. † But, Lord, you seem to have forgotten him, for whom you make these commandments. You order me to love thee, and to love my neighbour: but you speak not to me at all of myself; and yet 'tis by the love which I owe to myself, that you would I should regulate that which I owe to my neighbour. How then shall I observe this rule, not knowing it at all? And how shall I know it, if you don't explain to me, by a third commandment, in what manner I ought to love myself?

III. These questions, O my God! are resolved by the first commandment, which teaches man † how he ought to love himself, by teaching him that he ought to

* Mark xii. 30, 31.

† Videtur de homine ipso, id est, de amatore ipso nihil actum; sed parum dilucide, qui hoc arbitratur, intelligit. Non enim fieri potest, ut se ipsum, qui Deum diligit, non diligat. Immo vero solus se novit diligere, qui Deum diligit. *S. Aug. de mor. eccl. c. 26.*

‡ Cum debeat homo diligere Deum, et se ipsum, et proximum, non tamen tria præcepta data sunt, nec dictum est, in his tribus, sed in his duobus præceptis tota lex pendet et prophætæ; ut intelligeretur nullam esse aliam dilectionem quâ quisque diligit se ipsum, nisi quod diligit Deum. Quia igitur nemo, nisi Deum diligendo, diligit se ipsum, non opus erat ut dato de Dei dilectione præcepto, etiam se ipsum homo diligere juberetur; cum in eo diligat se ipsum, quod diligit Deum. *S. Aug. Epist. 255. ad Macedon. n. 15.*

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to love thee with the whole extent of his heart, and with all his strength. And a third commandment is useless.

IV. We, in effect, love ourselves as we ought, by loving God without bounds : because we then love the only good which can make us happy, and we remove ourselves, with all our strength, from that which would constitute our injustice and our misery.

V. God forbids us, by this law, which is the foundation and the essence of religion, to seek our felicity from any thing but him ; because it exists no where but in him. He obliges us to love him with *all* our heart, because he alone can fill it. He wills that our soul don't divide itself between him and other goods ; because he alone is above it, and he alone is its light and its life.

VI. * I demand *all*, says he to us ; because I cannot consent that you degrade yourselves, and subject yourselves to creatures, which either I have subjected to you, or to which I have made you equal. That, which I should not fill in you, would remain empty, and render your happiness imperfect. Your whole will tends naturally towards me : 'tis I who give it this impulse which nothing can either stop or suspend. It would be disquieted and devoured by its own proper hunger, if I did not fix it and fill it with joy by my presence. Re-unite it then wholly to me, and suffer not any the least stream to turn away from me, to lose itself in parched and infected grounds ; since I am the center of all your desires, and all those which have not me for their object, shall become your chastisement.

VII. Is it possible for man to be ungrateful and unjust enough to complain of such a law, which recommends to him nothing but the care of his own interests,

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* Hæc regula directionis divinitus constituta est : diliges inquit, proximum tuum sicut teipsum, Deum vero ex toto corde, et ex tota anima, et ex tota mente, ut omnes cogitationes tuas et omnem vitam et omnem intellectum in illum conferas, à quo habes ea ipsa quæ confers. Cum autem ait, toto corde, tota anima, tota mente ; nullam vitæ nostræ partem reliquit quæ vacare debeat, et quasi locum dare ut alia re frui velit ; sed quidquid aliud diligendum venerit in animum, illuc rapiatur, quæ totus dilectionis impetus currit. S. Aug. lib. 1. de doctr. Chr.

n. 21.

and which makes the love of himself one of his duties?

VIII. This corruption must be, indeed, great to make him regard, as a painful yoke, that which is his felicity and his glory.

IX. But man hath lost the taste of true goods, tho' he hath preserved a confused desire of them. He seeks after, and flies from them at the same time. He seeks them where they are not; and he shuns, with care, that place in which they are. He goes out of his own heart, to find them: yet, 'tis only by entering into it, that he can find them. He expands himself into a thousand desires after as many different things which divide and tear him into pieces: yet it is only in the unity of an infinite good, that he can find peace, by reuniting to it all his desires. He is seduced by every thing which retains the least appearance of that immense good he has lost: yet, the loss of this immense good touches him not. The least traces of the beauty of God in his works, attract his eyes and fix his attention: but he from whom all these beauties flow, comes not even into his remembrance.

A R T. V.

The error in taking our passions for ourself.

I. IF, at any time, man remembers God, 'tis with trembling, and with the discovery of nothing in him, but what is menacing and severe; because his law condemns his wanderings, errors, and bad conduct.

II. He takes the fever of his passions for himself, and the depravation of his own heart for his heart. He incorporates with himself all his faults, and cannot comprehend that there is any distinction between himself and his evil inclinations.

III. To attempt to cure him, is afflicting him. To take away nourishment for his passions, is taking away his life. He would thank a physician, who should cure

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cure him of a fever: but cannot endure that physician, who would deliver him from injustice. He knows the good of the body, and loves it; he knows its ill, and hates it: he knows well, that to preserve or to re-establish its health, is preserving it. He is not blind enough to confound the diseases of the body with the body itself. The sensation of pain is sufficient to advertise him of their difference.

IV. But this sensation advertises not the unjust man: On the contrary, pleasure represents to him, as his good, that which seduces him. He sees an image of felicity, and gives himself up to it. He feels some characteristics of good, and examines not what good is.

V. When we want to make him attentive, and to hinder him from following that blind impulse which hurries him on; either he hearkens not at all, or is content with condemning himself, without changing his conduct. A secret hunger agitates and torments him: and tho' he is always deceived in his expectations, and what he seizes serves only to inflame his thirst; yet he never grows weary of hurrying from object to object, complaining of each of them, and pursuing them all.

A R T. VI.

An effectual remedy taught by religion, viz. to ask of God, that he would make himself be more sensibly felt than other goods.

I **T**HE only remedy, which goes to the source of the evil, is, that God make himself more sensibly felt than all other goods; and make the heart know, by an inward experience, that he is its master, and that it is for God it was created.

II. Religion discovers this remedy to us; 'tis it which teaches us to ask earnestly of God, that he would disgust us at all limited goods, by making us experience, how far he is above them, and what difference there is between that slight tincture of goodness distributed

buted among his creatures, and that boundless and unfathomable goodness which is in himself.

III. 'Tis from religion, that these so importunate and so lively prayers of a man exposed to the danger of loving another thing than God, and who knows the interest he has in loving him alone, proceed *. Make me taste thy sweetness, O my God! thou who art the source of true joy, who alone can make me happy, and who alone subsists always. Recal and reunite to thyself all my desires, which have hitherto divided my heart, and, as it were, torn it into as many parts as there have been objects that have attracted it, while I turned away from thy unity, to expand and lose myself in a multitude of vanities †. Make me taste thy sweetness in a manner, which shall exceed all the lures of that which would be able to seduce me. Make me love thee resolutely; make me seize thy hand; and make me adhere to it with so great ardor, that it shall bear me over all perils, and over every thing which might tempt me, from this moment even to the end of my life.

IV. 'Tis this which we ought to ask at all times, and in a manner so lively and so persevering as to obtain it. For our danger proceeds only from this, that goods make upon us a continual impression, which hides from us the interest we have in obeying religion, and reserving ourselves for those goods, which it promises to us.

V. 'Tis

* *Dulcescas mihi, dulcedo non fallax, dulcedo felix. et secura; et colligens me a dispersione, in qua frustatim discissus sum, dum ab uno te averfus, in multa evanui. S. Aug. L. 2. Conf. c. 1.*

† *Dulcescas mihi super omnes seductiones quas sequebar, et amem te validissime, et amplexer manum tuam totis praeordiis meis, et eruas me ab omni tentatione usque in finem. S. Aug. L. 1. Conf. cap. 15.*

Da mihi te, Deus meus, redde te mihi, ut currat vita mea in amplexus tuos, nec avertatur, donec abscondatur in abscondito vultus tui. Hoc scio quia male mihi est praeter te, non solum extra me, sed et in me ipso, et omnis copia, quae Deus meus non est, egestas est. *S. Aug. L. 13. Conf. c. 8.*

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9. Conf. cap*

V. 'Tis from despair and want of courage, that men give themselves up to things unworthy their regard, for this only reason, that these things are present, and they cannot resolve with themselves to wait for others. Fasting for a few moments, to them appears insupportable. Like Esau, they want a speedy nourishment: like him, they basely abandon their birth-right and that inheritance which is annexed to it; and chuse rather to live one day on poison, than to secure to themselves eternal life by enduring an hunger, which constitutes a part of justice.

VI. After such perverseness they ought not to complain of religion. Themselves are their own enemies: themselves sacrifice their own interest to a childish impatience. Religion admonishes them: it bemoans them: but it is not hearkened to at all.

VII. Happy that man who is more docile, and who can resolve to defer his happiness in order to become solidly happy. He is beyond comparison more so, than the men of this world, not only on account of the joy which the hope of future bliss makes him feel, and the tranquillity of a pure conscience, but also by the inward pleasure which God makes be tasted by his servants in this the very place of their exile.

VIII. At first they fear, that the sacrifice which God requires, is a pure privation, without any mixture of consolation: * but they soon feel that God assumes the place of that, which they quit for him; and that instead of those vanities from which their heart separated itself with sighs, he himself enters into the heart, and makes it feel an infinite joy in renouncing all other goods, because it grows sensible that truth enters into the place of falsehood, and that a source of peace and of happiness succeeds to the delusion of an imaginary felicity.

CHAP.

* Quam suave mihi subito factum est carere suavitatibus nugarum? et quas amittere metus fuerat, jam demittere gaudium erat: ejiciebas enim eas a me, vera tu et summa suavitas; ejiciebas et intrabas pro eis, omni voluptate dulcior. *S. Aug. L. 9. Conf. cap. 1.*

C H A P. III.

Proofs of the existence of God. 1. The existence of bodies. 2. The motion of bodies. 3. The connexion and mutual relation of all the parts of the universe, 4. Organized bodies. 5. The reason and understanding even of those who doubt of or resist this truth. 6. The very doubting of a Deity is a demonstration of his existence. 7. The idea of God, is, of itself, a proof that he exists. 8. The existence of a first model of perfection, a first rule, a first beauty, unity and truth. 9. First, immutable principles of reasoning. 10. Matter incapable of thought and sentiment. 11. Union of the soul with the body. 12. Dependences of the thoughts, with respect to the corporeal organs; independence of other bodies with respect to the soul. 13. Ignorance of the soul, with respect to the mechanism of the motions which it commands, and which succeed the volitions. 14. The sensation of pain: it is not a property of matter; and the soul is an enemy to it. 15. The necessary desire of an infinite good, which nothing but that good can satisfy. 16. Law of nature, of which all the traces cannot be effaced. Duties superior to man, and independent of human institutions. 17. Reproaches and remorse of conscience, 18. The vain hope of some sinners, that God will pay but little attention to the actions of men.

THE first truth essential to religion, and on which all the rest depend, is the existence of a God. This truth spontaneously presents itself to the human reason, which has more need to be attentive to it, than to enter into researches for its discovery; because the proofs of it are public, evident and sensible, since every thing that exists serves to demonstrate it.

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A R T. I.

FIRST PROOF.

The existence of bodies.

IT is impossible to shut our eyes to the frame of nature, and doubt of the reality of all the beings which surround us. If a person should be so obstinate as to look upon their existence as uncertain, yet this doubt would be a proof, that such a person exists; because he thinks; and, by this means, we should join a demonstration of the existence of spirits, to the proof that there are bodies.

I here confine myself to the simple existence of bodies, without considering them as susceptible of motion and figure. I ask what is their origin? Are they eternal? Are they independant? Or do they proceed from themselves? If this be the case, matter is possessed of that which appears most incomprehensible in God, and constitutes the principle difficulty which confounds reason. Matter has being from itself; it exists necessarily: it is the beginning of being; nay, which is more, it is being itself, by a plain consequence.

But do we find these characters of divinity in the idea of matter? Is to be extended and consist of parts, the same thing as existing by one's self? Whence comes it that matter wants so many perfections, such as understanding, will, liberty, justice, since it has given being to itself? Who has limited it, since it is independent? who has bounded the being of that matter, which is itself the origin of being. We must do strange violence to reason, before we can attribute to matter what we should refuse to God, and what we should refuse to him only because we cannot comprehend it; tho' every thing is easily explained by acknowledging a supreme God, the source of being, and the Creator of all things. But we can account for nothing in admitting the independency of matter.

A R T.

A R T. II.

SECOND PROOF.

The motion of bodies.

I Proceed from the consideration of the existence of bodies, to that of their motion, which by no means appear to me to arise from matter. On the contrary, I see very evidently that matter is indifferent to motion or rest: that it would not be less what it is by its nature, tho' it was eternally immoveable; and that it is necessary that the motion which it cannot, from its natural principles, give itself, should be communicated to it by a superior and immaterial being who gives laws to it, and who has no occasion for any thing but his own will to make his commands be obeyed; for matter can have no power over matter, and a spirit can only move matter by his will, which, of course, must be all-powerful in the first mover.

A R T. III.

THIRD PROOF.

The connection and mutual relation of all the parts of the universe.

AFTER these general reflections, I attentively consider the universe, the connection of all its parts; their beauty, order, and tendency to promote the same end. I must in particular consider the motion of the sun, so regular thro' the year, tho' he changes every day; so proper for the different seasons, and so adapted to the necessities of man, and the growth of the fruits which nourish him. The moon also, with her variations, (which however are so regular in their apparent inequality, that they are exactly calculated by astronomy,) also commands my admiration. The infinite number of stars, with which the firmament is be-

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spangled, fills me with astonishment, which I cannot express: and I can find nothing on earth but what augments this amazement. Her fertility which time has never exhausted, the animals of so many different species with which she is furnished, the fountains and rivers which water her like the veins and arteries of the human body, and that infinite variety of fruits, which she every year produces, supply me with a thousand reflections. The sea is also a rich subject for contemplation. She is the source of the vapours and rains so necessary to the earth; and lest she should by her corruption, taint the purity of the air, her waters are preserved by a due mixture of salt, and by a continual motion, which twice a-day forces them regularly to the extremities, whence they return to the middle by their natural weight. This motion is so proportioned to the height of the banks that it causes no disorder. But if it was more violent, it would produce a general inundation; because, on the one hand, the sea would advance too far on the land, and on the other, she would by this means so swell the rivers, that they must of course overflow the earth.

When I consider these wonders, whether separately or in conjunction, I cannot doubt but infinite wisdom is the cause of them, and I should find probability in the most incredible things, rather than in the absurd thought that it is chance which has thus disposed and regulated the universe. An order so connected, so constant, so general, where all is conducted by weight and measure, where nothing has misgiven in the course of so many ages, where the laws are so regular, and the principles so sure, cannot be attributed to so defective and inconsistent a cause as chance, but by a man who either does not think at all, or says the contrary of what he thinks.

A R T.

A R T. IV.

FOURTH PROOF.

Organized bodies.

THE error we are confuting, appears still more monstrous, when we consider organized bodies, such as plants and animals. For in these the first thing we remark is, that the whole is formed with design, that every part has its use and end, and that each part has organs proper for its peculiar purpose; that these organs are prepared with so much justness, placed with so much order, and employed with so much success, that the more learned a man is, the more he is amazed at the incomparable art which shines with such lustre in the disposition of a plant, or in the structure of the minutest animal.

We need only consider the eye, with the assistance of a good anatomist, in order to see that all the parts of which it is composed have a relation to the light, and that they are destined to receive it in the necessary degree; to re-unite and divide it by refractions, and to transmit into the brain, the image, which the rays of light form in the bottom of the eye, by the gentle agitation of the optic nerve.

This holds also true with respect to the ear, all whose organs have a relation to the sounds of the tongue and the neighbouring parts, which are visibly designed for the purposes of speech. This holds true of the stomach, which is made on purpose for the aliments; of the intestines, whose structure and convolutions are destined to receive and prepare the chyle; of the heart which is formed for receiving the blood lent to it from the extremities by the veins, and again propelling it to the extremities thro' the arteries; and of the lungs, whose soft and lax composition, renders them fit for receiving and returning the air.

In a word, it is thus with all the parts of an animal, even the most minute, and such as the vulgar take to be

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be imperfect, tho' to the knowing and intelligent, the delicacy of art shines here with a brighter lustre.

Who can resist so palpable an evidence? Can any one say that chance formed the eye without any design that it should bear a relation to the light; tho' there is no part in the former, but what serves for the reception and transmission of the latter? and this holds true with respect to the ear and all the other parts? can any one comprehend that the eye should be always thus formed by chance which never knew any thing of the matter? Can any mortal carry folly to such an excess, as to pretend that the numberless parts of which each animal is composed, which have so mutual a relation to each other, which concur so manifestly to the perfection of the whole, and the study of which constitutes the knowledge of the most learned physicians, tho' their speculations are infinitely below the art which they study; can any one, I say, go to such an excess of phrenzy, as to pretend that chance has formed these parts, without destining them for some use, without an union between themselves, without a certain relation to the whole, and without following any rules.

If there are men who can seriously think, in this manner, religion is sufficiently avenged of them; and they do her a great deal of honour in only refusing to submit to her, because they refuse to succumb to the most simple and persuasive lights of reason.

A R T. V.

FIFTH PROOF.

The reason and understanding even of those very persons who either doubt of this truth or oppose it.

WHENCE does this very reason which these men oppose to religion, proceed? is it an intelligent cause which has rendered them intelligent? If this be the case, they ought to give glory to God; for they acknowledge an independent and intelligent principle,

principle, who has given them being and understanding; and by this means they confess the true God of whom they seem to be ignorant. If, on the contrary, they say, that their understanding proceeds from a blind principle which neither knows nor thinks, they tell us an inconceivable absurdity, and directly attack our first notions of things, which effectually convince us that nothing cannot convey being to any thing; that what does not exist cannot give existence, and that the want of reason cannot produce reason. If these men make all the suppositions they possibly can, yet still understanding will never proceed from a principle that has it not; otherways what is would be the effect of what is not. Thus, even the abuse of reason is a proof of the deity; for this abuse supposes the power of reasoning better; and this power can be given only by a sovereign reason on which all other reasons depend.

A R T. VI.

SIXTH PROOF.

Even the doubting of a deity is a demonstration of his existence.

I Carry this argument farther, and can shew that even the doubting of a deity proves his existence. For of what does such a person doubt? Has he the idea of it? does he know what he seeks for? If he is ignorant of it, he gives himself needless trouble; if he knows it, he has already found it. The proof of this is evident; I cannot have the idea of God without conceiving him as an infinitely perfect being; and I cannot conceive him in this manner, without comprehending actual existence in his idea, because this is the first and most essential of all perfections. Now, 'tis an infallible maxim in reasoning, that we ought to affirm all of any object that we discover in its idea. We have no other rule for reasoning justly. I affirm of a circle, of a triangle, of a given number, of man, of justice, and

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and of order, every thing I see clearly in their ideas; and I deny of all these objects what is incompatible with their ideas. It is therefore as certain that God necessarily exists, as it is certain that actual existence is comprehended in the idea of an infinitely perfect being.

Some fallacy may at first be suspected in this reasoning, tho' very simple and clear: because we are accustomed to separate the actual existence of things from their ideas, and rest satisfied with concluding their possibility: but this happens, because possibility alone is included in their ideas, and we see nothing more there, since all beings, except God, may either be or not be. But, in the idea of the infinitely perfect being, we clearly see actual and necessary existence with such evidence, as to exclude the simple possibility of it as unworthy of him; and the same principle which hinders us from saying of any creature, that it must necessarily exist, because we only see a simple possibility in its idea, forces us to acknowledge that God exists necessarily; because in his idea we see actual and necessary existence.

A R T. VI.

SEVENTH PROOF.

The idea of God considered alone, is a proof that he exists.

THE idea of God alone independently of the former reasoning, is sufficient to prove that he exists. For whence had I this idea of a being so different from what I am myself; so distant from what I see either in myself, or in other creatures? If there is nothing above me, where got I a notion of what surpasses me infinitely? I am limited in all respects, subject to inconstancy, weak and dependent; and yet I know what is infinite, eternal, immutable, independent, perfect in every respect, and omnipotent by a single act of volition. I could not go beyond the extent of

my own being: I could not think above what I am; my actions and my being are upon a level with each other: some light then superior to my soul, must have shewn it what it had not, and discovered to it a beauty and a perfection, infinitely above its lowness.

It cannot be replied that such an idea is arbitrary, that every one forms it as he pleases; and that it is the consequence of the reflexions a person has made on his own faults, and the imperfections of other beings, which have been used as so many steps or gradations, to form the idea of a perfection exempted from the like mixture and alloy of imperfections and defects.

All men readily know what we mean, when we speak to them of an infinitely perfect being. It is not in the power of any person to retrench any thing from his idea, or to blend any thing with it, which is unworthy of him. If any one was to attempt such a thing, all his fellow creatures would tell him that he was mistaken; and consequently this idea is of the same nature with those which are common to all men, which form the basis of their reason, and are intirely independent of their wills.

This idea then, is so far from being the result of the reflexions of men on their own faults, and on the imperfections of other beings, that it is on the contrary, evidently this idea of a sovereign perfection, which discovers to them what is wanting to themselves and to other beings; and that without this first rule, this original model, they could neither discern good from evil, nor one degree of good from the highest. We must in every kind know what is perfect, in order to judge of what deviates from perfection. 'Tis thus we judge of a statue, a picture, a piece of architecture, a discourse, or a train of reasoning. If we have not the idea of what these things ought to be, we cannot know the defects of them; so far is this original idea from being formed by the view of faults, which without it would have remained for ever unknown.

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A R T. VIII.

EIGHTH PROOF.

The existence of an original model of perfection, of a first rule, a first beauty, unity, and truth.

BUT whence had man this universal rule which extends to all kinds of being, to all species of beauty, to all proportions and agreements, whether in arts, sciences, or morality? Who serves as a model for the whole? Who condemns every thing that recedes from that model? Who marks the degrees according to which approaches are made to it? And what mind determines all others to judge of every thing as it judges of them? Can we possibly conceal those two important truths from ourselves; that such a rule is order itself, beauty itself, and justice itself; and that it cannot consequently be any other than the only true God, who enlightens men with respect to all perfections, by giving them the idea of that perfection, which in him is without bounds and without measure.

A R T. IX.

NINTH PROOF.

The first immutable principles of reasoning.

IT is in this naturally simple, tho' infinite idea that all those other ideas subsist, which serve as principles to the human reason; and which can neither be opposed nor denied by any man. It is in this light superior to all created spirits, that we see these universal propositions in so clear and distinct a manner; that nothing can produce nothing; that existence is necessarily previous to action; that extension has parts; that knowledge is an advantage above simple existence;

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that order is a good thing ; that a bad reasoning is faulty ; and an incredible number of similar maxims which cannot be seriously contested ; and which carry their own evidence and proof along with them.

It is not by compact that men have agreed to them ; it is not in their power to alter them. They are every where the same, and universally constitute the unvariable rule of reason. They ought not then to be confounded with reason, since they serve to enlighten and to rectify it. They are therefore superior to reason, since reason must necessarily be subjected to them. And what can we conceive to be the infallible light of reason, and the internal master of all souls, if not God himself?

A R T. X.

TENTH PROOF.

Matter is incapable of thought and sensation.

I Am under no temptation to attribute to matter, the origin of those primitive unalterable and universal truths which are superior to human reason ; since between human reason and matter there is as great a distance as there is between matter and nothing. Matter neither thinks nor has any principle of thought in its being. It is susceptible of motion, rest and figure ; but thought can never be the effect either of any motion or of any figure. By dividing the parts of matter we add nothing to them. By impelling them with more or less celerity, we do not communicate a new nature to them. The same degree of being, and the same properties still subsist ; and people absolutely know not what they say, when they affirm that what was stupid and insensible under the form of a stone, will become capable of understanding when reduced to another figure, and subjected to a different transposition of parts.

In this case the truth is so evident, that nothing but sincerity and attention are requisite to shew it.

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But let us for a moment suppose the point dubious, and let us attempt to make matter think and reason. All its parts are really distinct; and tho' they are placed contiguous to each other, yet they are actually separated. What is known to one part will be unknown to another: what is done by one part, will not be done by another. How then shall it compare several ideas, which however is necessary to form a proposition? How shall it compare several propositions, which however is necessary to the formation of a reasoning? How shall it compare several reasonings, which however compose a connected discourse. Every part of matter we shall suppose to have a certain knowledge and a certain action. But who shall reunite these separate knowledges and actions; and who shall determine the point after having united them? Is it not visible that no understanding which is not immaterial and indivisible, can reduce several ideas into a thought, and several thoughts into a reasoning, and that 'it is consequently absolutely impossible that matter should be intelligent or capable of thought.

The same thing may be proved by the sensations, tho' the vulgar looks upon them as less distant from matter than thought is. The organs of the senses are different: I see light and colours by the eye: I hear sounds by the ear: I receive the impressions of smells and tastes by distinct organs. These sensations are all very different from each other, and even more different than the organs which are their canals; notwithstanding which, they are all re-united in a subject which compares them, judges of them, and distinguishes them in uniting them.

I can at one and the same time hear music, see a fine garden, perceive the odour of flowers, and feel cold or heat by the touch. I can compare these different sensations, and prefer one to another; and it is evident that I could not do so, if they were not received into an indivisible subject very different from matter: because otherways each sensation would tend to different ends; one would be absolutely unknown to the other; and it would be as impossible to compare them,

them, and judge of them, as it is for the eye to judge of sounds, or the ear of colours.

I cannot therefore doubt but that which thinks and perceives in me is immaterial, simple, indivisible; and in a word spiritual. After this it is certain not only there are other beings besides matter, which have an almost infinite advantage above it; but also that a first absolutely independent spirit has given these beings their existence.

A R T. XI.

ELEVENTH PROOF.

The union of the soul with the body.

MY persuasion of this truth is corroborated, when I compare my spiritual being with the body to which it is united; for it is not I myself who have desired this union; it does not even appear possible to me, if we only consider spirit and matter. Matter and thought are not made for each other, but are in their own natures independent of each other. What spirit and matter therefore could not do, must have been done by the Creator of both; and his will, which is the rule of all things, must have established a relation between these things, which before had none.

By this means I know that his will is absolutely free, since it unites subjects which naturally ought to be separate; and the more I reflect on the laws of so improbable an union, the more I discover that they are all arbitrary, and constitute so many proofs of the sovereign liberty of God, and of his empire over nature.

A R T.

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of the CHRISTIAN FAITH.

A R T. XII.

TWELFTH PROOF.

Dependence of the thoughts on the corporeal organs, and the independance of other bodies on the soul.

THOUGH thought is naturally independent of the body, yet the order and train of my thoughts depend on what passes in my head; and if the disposition of it is disturbed, I have no longer the free use of judgment and memory. It is not the body, but the soul, which sees light and hears sounds. A man blind and deaf from his birth, knows not what light and speech are.

Who then has implanted in me a necessary connexion between things independent? I am so far from being the author of this connexion, that I cannot even comprehend the mystery of it. Besides, matter does not obey spirit. In vain do I command the air and the water; my orders are not followed. But if I command the body united to my soul, its obedience is as ready as my will; and I must consequently attribute this obedience to my will, since every other part of matter is deaf to my voice.

A R T. XIII.

THIRTEENTH PROOF.

The ignorance of the soul, with respect to the mechanism of the motions which it commands, and which succeed its volitions.

I Am still more confirmed in the independance of other bodies on my soul, when I consider that I myself know not what I command, nor in what manner I ought to be obeyed, when I command my body to rise up or sit down. For these actions, which appear

A TREATISE of the PRINCIPLES

pear very simple, an infinite number of springs, with whose names and uses I am unacquainted, must be employed. The most skilful anatomists have only observed the most visible of these, whilst the rest have escaped their view, and baffled their researches. But tho' they had an exact knowledge of these springs, it would be of no use to render the obedience of the body more ready and easy, since the bodies of the most illiterate men obey their wills as readily as those of the most learned.

I must therefore evidently perceive, that it is to God alone that I ought to attribute the dependance of my body, with respect to actions, which ought to be naturally independent of it; and that it is to the will of God alone, that I ought to ascribe that obedience which my body pays me, not only because every other part of matter is unacquainted with me, but also because the springs of my body, and their various uses are unknown to me; and even in my own body I have no power over the motions which are not subjected to me, such as that of the heart, nor over the repose of certain parts which a palsy has rendered incapable of voluntary or spontaneous motion.

A R T. XIV.

FOURTEENTH PROOF.

The sensation of pain. It is not a property of matter; it is abhorred by the soul.

IN the union of my soul and body, nothing more surprizes me than the pain I sometimes feel, when the state and disposition of my body is altered. In order to make me suffer a great deal, nothing more is requisite than an undue secretion of any one of the humours. When cutting instruments or fire act upon my body, I feel an inexpressible torment. Whence comes such a prodigy? What does it concern a spiritual being, that the parts of matter should be displaced and put out of order? What necessary relation is there between

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tween a certain corporeal motion, and a pain so acute and pungent as that which renders me miserable?

The least reflection is sufficient to teach me that sensibility and pain are not in the body, because matter is incapable of sensation; and the experience of those who have had an arm or a leg cut off, and who feel acute pains in the amputated limb, still farther convinces me that it is so.

Besides, it is not my soul that gives itself a sensation which torments it, and which it would willingly be free from. It seeks to fly from it, but cannot. It is applied to it against its inclination; and except, patience and submission, it has no means either of suspending its impression, or diminishing its acuteness.

Who then, does not in this see the hand of the Omnipotent, who makes himself felt to souls as much as he pleases; who by his action penetrates into the most intimate recesses of their being; who can try them, punish them and render them miserable, while at the same time they have no sanctuary or place of protection to fly to from him; and who teaches them to tremble before an infinite power, on which their happiness or their misery, their consolation or their punishment depend?

A R T. XV.

FIFTEENTH PROOF.

The necessary desire of an infinite good, which nothing but that good can satisfy.

I Feel another kind of misery, which has no relation to the body; and which astonishes me still more. I seemingly stand in need of nothing, and yet I am not content. I have arrived where I now am by degrees, and I did believe that all the places which I have successively occupied, would have rendered me happy: but none of them has satisfied my desires. I am perhaps envied, but I know best what sentiments ought to be entertained of my happiness.

I have carefully considered the man who is thought to be placed in the highest station of life; and I confess that his condition does not tempt me; not because I desire nothing, but because I desire infinitely more.

I ask myself whence proceeds this desire which nothing can satisfy here below. I have long ago examined its characters, the principal of which are these. I am not willing to die, and I am also unwilling to be deceived. What I have I would always possess without anxiety or fear; and consequently I would be assured that no accident should make me lose it, nor no power deprive me of it. I perceive that I wish to command and be master; I also feel that I love to be esteemed, and to merit that esteem from all the discerning and virtuous part of mankind. I wish, in a word, for all the good things of this life; and I find that it is not in my power to reduce this desire to some particular and limited goods. I evidently wish for that which is eternal and infinite; and I necessarily do so, because this desire is previous to my reflections and thoughts, and does not depend upon my deliberation or choice.

On the contrary, it is the basis and foundation of all my deliberations; and I am only inclined and determined to any particular good, by the general impression that irresistibly pushes me on to an infinite good, which comprehends and surpasses all particular and limited goods.

Is it not evident that God alone could give me a desire which can only terminate in himself; a desire of which I am not the beginning, of which I cannot be the end; and which gives me a well-grounded hope, that God will not withhold himself from my ardent desires, since it is he himself who has implanted in my will, so violent and so rapid a natural motion towards him?

A R T.

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A R T. XVI.

SIXTEENTH PROOF.

The law of nature, of which all the traces cannot be effaced. Duties superior to man, and independent of human institution.

THIS proof of a deity affords me an opportunity of making an inquiry into the law of nature, and of examining whether it prescribes certain duties, or whether these duties only depend upon human institution.

It is allowed, that 'tis necessary to honour our parents, to be faithful to our friends, and to testify our gratitude for benefits received. But I ask whether these duties are arbitrary, or whether the want of them implies real vice and injustice; whether it is an indifferent action to assassinate a man from whom we have received all kinds of favours; a man who reposes an intire confidence in us, and who has nothing in his whole conduct but what commands respect and veneration; and whether we confess that this crime is of a black and atrocious nature, independently of human laws? I ask how it is a crime, if it be not forbidden; and how it is forbidden before human laws forbid it? I ask, where is the law which forbids it; where is it written, or where has it been published? If I am told that it is the law written in the hearts of all men, I proceed to ask who engraved it so deeply in the very frame of their being? And it is impossible to deny that it is God alone who has done so.

If it should be retorted that an assassination in particular given circumstances is not forbidden by the law of nature, but yet does not cease to be unjust, because it is contrary to the interest of civil society, and destructive of public safety: I ask why it is contrary to civil society and unjust? and what law forbids this kind of injustice? We must necessarily have recourse to a first law superior to all men, and independent of

any human establishment, or grant that there is no real injustice in the blackest crimes; that the duties thought most essential, are only simple modes and customs; and that the difference between virtue and vice is only founded on popular opinion.

When we are come to this method of arguing, the demonstration of religion will be compleat; for nothing more shews its truth than the want of power to oppose it any otherways than by overthrowing the foundations of probity, and destroying the obligations to all duties. I say all, because if we reserve a single one which is independent of men; that one which the law of nature prescribes, invincibly demonstrates the existence of a primitive justice, which is the rule and standard of that of men; which is before them and after them, and which they can neither bend nor change.

A R T. XVII.

SEVENTEENTH PROOF.

The reproaches and remorse of conscience.

WHence proceed these so sharp and bitter reproaches of conscience, when we have committed a bad action? In vain the guilty try to appease them. The shrill and piercing cry of that internal voice surmounts every thing that can be opposed to it. In vain the transgressor flies from his own heart, and hastes as it were to get out of himself, that he may not be overwhelmed with confusion, before a judge, who upbraids him with the blackness and baseness of his crime. No frolic is a remedy, and the criminal amidst the most expensive amusements and entertainments, is seized with terror and covered with confusion, before the invisible censor and judge whom he carries in his bosom.

Who is this censor? What is this voice which so bitterly reproaches the transgressor for his crime?

What

What is this light which shines in darkness, and which the darkness cannot hide? What is it in the sinner which cries out so loudly against his sin? The person must be blind who confounds a wicked man with that which condemns his wickedness; and stupid if he does not distinguish from the man, that incorruptible truth, and that eternal justice which shews him his duty, comforts him when he is faithful in performing it, and confounds him when he neglects it.

A R T. XVIII.

The vain hope of some sinners, who imagine that God will have but little regard to the actions of men.

WE may from what has been said, easily judge how vain the hope of some sinners is, who flatter themselves that God will have but little regard to the actions of men. He is too great, say they, to take notice of us; and we too mean and inconsiderable to attract his regard or attention. He despises, or at least pities our failings; and we are not of such importance, as that he should be in a passion with us, or disturb his repose by examining into our actions, which can neither do him good nor harm. This is the principal shelter and refuge of the impious, this is what they vainly attempt to oppose to the most certain revelation.

They are ignorant that this calm and passive God, of whom they have formed a false idea, is the very being who in this life reproaches them so strongly for their crimes, tho' this life is the time of his patience: that his terrible voice makes them tremble in the innermost parts, tho' he measures and temperates it, that he may not anticipate the last day, when his thunder is to burst out in its full force on the wicked and the ungodly: that his light penetrates into their darkness, and dissipates their vain excuses, tho' the time for the manifestation of his judgments is not as yet come.

They vainly imagine that God is absent, distracted by other cares, and but little attentive to their actions;

and they know not that he is within them; that he is present to every thing, not only to their actions, but also to their smallest desires, and their most trifling thoughts. That at every instant he passes his judgment upon every action, and raises his voice in proportion, as the crimes are more voluntary and inexcusable.

God is too great, say they, and we too little and inconsiderable. But of what grandeur have they the idea? Do they know that God is great in justice and holiness? Do they know that his grandeur consists in being order, by his very essence and the eternal law? And do they imagine that they reason well, in supposing that, because God is infinitely opposite to sin, he will therefore be an indifferent spectator of it. Vice cannot indeed hurt God, but is it for that the less contrary to his holy laws? And is it not an aggravation of the crimes of men, that they dare to disobey a Majesty before whom the whole universe is as nothing?

But the wicked man foolishly imagines that God resembles himself, and is as little affected with iniquity as he himself is. He imagines that God does not see what he desires should be unknown to him; and he does not reflect that the reproaches of his conscience are the voice of God, which at once instructs and reprehends him*.

* Understand, O ye brutish among the people, and ye fools, when will ye be wise. He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? He that formed the eye, shall he not see? He that chastiseth the heathen, shall he not correct? He that teacheth men knowledge, shall he not know, Ps. 8, 9, 10. Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thyself: but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes. Now consider this, ye that forget God. Ps. 1. 22.

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C H A P. IV.

Man is bound to perform some duties towards God. Natural reason alone does not discover these duties. They are not to be certainly learned by consulting other men. It is absolutely necessary that God should reveal what he requires of men. Every religion which is not founded on divine revelation, does not deserve an examination. The easiness of discovering a divine revelation. The necessity of the divine revelation's being written. A proof that the divine revelation has been preserved pure in the scriptures, and that we have no need to examine them for that purpose.

A R T. I.

Man is bound to perform some duties towards God.

THE proofs for the being of a God, advanced in the preceeding chapter, might lead us to many others which I would mention, if I was not obliged to confine myself within proper bounds. The hand of God is plainly observable in all his works, and every thing bears its character. Man alone, when carefully studied, in a thousand ways, discovers the infinite power and wisdom of his Author. But this is only the first step; I know that God is, and that every thing exists thro' him. I know that I have received of him whatever I am. But I am ignorant of what I owe him, because I am not sufficiently acquainted with the design he had in giving me life.

I cannot however doubt but he had some design in giving me being; for in myself I observe that every thing has its destination and proper end. The eye is designed to see, the ear to hear, the hand to act, and the foot to walk. It is not therefore possible, that every part should be made with a design, and that the whole should yet be without one.

The body is for the soul, and obeys it ; but for whom is the soul, and whom ought it to obey ? I have reason, but who ought to conduct it ? I have received understanding to know the truth, but what truth ? I have a will to desire good, but what is the good I ought to desire.

In examining the proofs of the existence of God, I have discovered that he is the light of my reason ; that it is from him I receive the first truths that enlighten it ; that it is by the knowledge of his idea, that I am instructed in what is good or defective in other beings. Would he then confine me only to the knowledge of his creatures, when he has given me the knowledge of himself ; or would he be content to have enlightened me with respect to all other objects, without requiring from me any regard or attention to himself ?

I have also a full conviction, that the propensity of my will towards good, proceeds from him ; and that all the characters of the good I desire, are only to be found in him. Would he then have put me into motion, without marking the point to which I ought to move ? Or would he have consented that I should stop at the creatures, after having received a continual impression which carries me towards himself ?

I must renounce all my light, all the internal sentiments I feel within me, before I can be capable of doubting seriously ; whether God, in giving me being, had a design that I should use it for him, who is my destination and ultimate end.

A R T. II.

Natural reason alone does not discover all these duties.

BUT I know not as yet what my duties are. I only know that I am bound to some, and that I cannot neglect them without becoming highly culpable ; because these duties are the essential condition which God has annexed to all that he has given me ; that they are the law of my being ; the fundamental title of my life ; and that my disobedience would be at once
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the highest ingratitude, and a direct revolt against the most indispensable natural order.

I have therefore an infinite interest in knowing these duties; in knowing them all, and in knowing them certainly. But whence shall this so exact and certain a knowledge come? For this purpose I have only two means in my power.

The first is, carefully to examine the idea which God has given me of him, and that which I have of myself. But the first thing I discover in God, is the vast disproportion between him and my thoughts. He is infinite, and I am limited. If I attempt to judge of him by my own reflexions or conjectures, I am in imminent danger of being deceived. My mind is incapable of exploring his. His free volitions are unknown to me; and even these which I should attribute to him as necessary, may be very different from my prejudices; because, in God, every thing is the same with his nature; and consequently all his attributes are as unsearchable and as incomprehensible as himself.

As to the idea I have of myself, I should not choose to sit down contented with a light so weak on the one hand, and so precarious and uncertain on the other. I have a faint and glimmering view of some duties, but a great many others may be concealed from me; and even those which I do discover, do not at all times appear to me cloathed with the same degrees of evidence. I find in myself an inconstancy which astonishes me. Truths, and the clouds which darken them, succeed each other mutually; and sometimes there is but an instant between certainty and doubt.

A R T. III.

We do not certainly learn all these duties by consulting other men.

THE second means, which is that of consulting other men, appears to me to be much better, because it is more agreeable to the just diffidence and distrust

I ought to have of my own knowledge; and because I have a secret propensity to believe that religion does not consist in conjecture; and that the reason of a single person is not of sufficient force and extent to discover the whole plan and oeconomy of it; and that instead of seeking for it in my own reflexions, the surest method is to learn it from those who are well acquainted with it.

But if I consult other men with respect to religion, I soon find that my own imperfections are common to them; that, in all of them, reason is as timorous and confined as in myself; and that abstracting from the presumption of many, who decide without proofs for what they have not examined, reason is, even in the wisest men, more capable of forming than of resolving doubts.

It would be here needless to specify their variations, uncertainties, and even contradictions, with respect to essential points. I shall only say, that it is not their fault, if they do not make what I am best acquainted with appear uncertain; and that they only have it in their power to augment my perplexities, without affording me the means of getting free from them.

ART. IV.

God must have necessarily revealed to man, what he requires of him.

INSTEAD of being discouraged at these difficulties, I feel my hope increased; and the less I see the possibility of instructing myself in religion by human means, the more I am confirmed in my confidence that there are others; and I am established in this opinion by reasoning thus. It appears evident to me, that God inclines that man should know what he owes to him; and that man cannot know it from man. It therefore appears equally evident to me, that God has revealed his will to man; and that, if he has done so, such a revelation could not possibly be lost.

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This is what I have always thought ; but I durst not venture to follow this light, which however is very simple and natural, before I had tried other means, for fear of exposing myself to illusion, by quitting the usual method.

After this, it is reason itself, and natural evidence, which shew me the necessity of revelation ; and incline me not only to desire it, but also to inform myself whether there is one, and whether any memorial of it is still preserved.

This method alone is certain, and adapted to all men. It is infallible, as religion ought to be, and does not require of men such a discussion as they are incapable of. It confirms all souls ; decides all doubts ; exactly points out all duties ; manifests the free volitions of God ; teaches man what he ought to hope from his goodness, or dread from his justice ; regulates external worship, and determines wherein that which is true and internal, and of which the former is only as it were the body, consists.

A R T. V.

Every religion not founded on a divine revelation, is unworthy of examination.

THIS truth carries me farther, and I am not afraid to affirm, that every religion, not founded on a divine revelation, deserves no examination, and is visibly defective, since it is established only on human conjectures unworthy to subject all men, and incapable of teaching them what God thinks, and what he promises.

I am only perplexed about two things ; the first of which is, how I shall discover whether there is a divine revelation ; and the second, how I shall distinguish it from others which falsely claim the same honour.

A R T.

This

A R T. VI.

The easiness of discovering the divine revelation.

HERE the divine providence is manifest: a single people selected from all those on earth, boasts of having learned immediately of God how he chooses to be served; and this people is dispersed every where. Thus I cannot be ignorant of this revelation, but find it without difficulty; and since no other people pretend to have received from God neither his laws nor worship, I am free'd from the trouble of examining which of the revelations is the true one. There is only one, which is therefore certain.

Such a discovery fills me with joy and admiration; and I cannot sufficiently thank the divine goodness, which has not permitted that error should dare to dispute two essential points, on which all the rest depend. God has revealed his will to man, and he has not suffered the revelation to be dubious. He has chosen a peculiar people, as the preservers of pure unadulterated religion; and he has hindered the false traditions of other people from throwing weak men into the necessity of deliberating, and the danger of making a bad choice.

A R T. VII.

Necessity that the divine revelation should be written.

I Confess I should not be free from anxiety, if I was obliged to ask many individuals of that people, in order to inform myself of their traditions; and that I should be afraid, lest, in passing thro' so many ages, they had suffered some alterations. But I know that the whole is written, and that long ago the traditions are fixed in books, which that people adore as divine.

But doubts may be formed, with respect to these books themselves. It may be asked whether they have been preserved with sufficient care; whether important changes

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changes have not been designedly made in them; whether the authors to whom they are ascribed have been sufficiently informed of what they wrote; and whether the tradition, which ascribes these books to the said men is well founded? There are particular answers to all these doubts. The *Jews* carry the respect they have for the scriptures to a scrupulous delicacy. They look upon it as an atrocious crime, either to add to them, or retrench one word, or even one letter from them. The authors of the canonical books were not only sincere, but also inspired, and prophets; and the original records have been always wrote by coteremporary authors, as might be easily proved.

A R T. VIII.

Proofs that the divine revelation has been preserved pure in the scriptures, and that it is not necessary to examine them for that purpose.

I Have no occasion for entering into a detail of these proofs; and in following the principles which have conducted me hither, I see evidently, that the same reasons which demonstrate the necessity of a revelation, also demonstrate the necessity of its being preserved in its purity, otherways God would have spoken in vain to men*. He would have instructed some in his will, without preserving for others the means of knowing it. He would have established a religion without taking care to support it. He would have judged revelation necessary, and have afterwards rejected it as useless. He would have forced men again, to examine what is agreeable to him, after having freed them from an examination which is above their power. He would have even added new difficulties to this examination, by permitting the monuments of his worship to be altered by foreign institutions, which ought to be intirely separate from them. Thus he would have laid a snare for humble and unwary souls, in suffering books, which had acquired a sovereign authority, to consist of a mixture of

* Vid. Originem in ep. ad Jul. African. p. 227.

of truth and error ; and in permitting his own revelation to be altered by human fictions.

All these suppositions are impossible ; and I so clearly see the impossibility of them, that I have no occasion for any discussion, in order to receive from the *Jews* the canon of the scriptures, as a sacred thing of which the divine providence has taken particular care ; and of which the preservation is founded on the same reasons the divine wisdom had for ordering his will to be wrote from the beginning.

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of the PRINCIPLES of the

CHRISTIAN FAITH.

PART II.

The principles of the christian religion proved by
the books of the Old Testament.

C H A P. I.

The truth of the scriptures proved by their antiquity. They alone can give us a true knowledge of the rise and origin of different nations, and of their most antient records. Proved to be true from the tradition of every people, especially by that particular period of time, to which these general traditions are brought. Moses proved to be the author of the books called by his name. More arguments brought to prove the divinity of these books. The truth of the miracles there related.

A R T. I.

Arguments brought to prove the truth of the scriptures.

THUS being convinced of the veneration which
I ought to have for these sacred writings, I re-
VOL. I. E gard

gard them as much as if God himself had delivered them into my own hands: no sooner do I look into them, but I clearly perceive, that they contain an uninterrupted history, brought down from the creation of the world to very distant ages; I find too, that some of these books are more ancient than any which have been handed down to us from other nations. I could not but admire the history of the Hebrews, especially since it is so curiously interspersed with the story of the neighbouring nations, and all this executed in a manner so full of exactness and knowledge, that the more we are conversant in antiquity, the more will this help us clearly to perceive the light of that truth which shines thro' all parts of the scripture.

I am not a little satisfied too, when I find so exact a calculation of time, together with the situation and description of places laid down in so accurate a manner. My satisfaction is still more heightened when I read the history of ancient kingdoms, perfectly agreeing with the accounts given by the most able historians of other nations. I find likewise a short but exact account of the rise of different nations, how they were dispersed, and in what places they fixed their residence, and who were the leading men in settling these first colonies.

A R T. H.

The scriptures alone can give us a true knowledge of the rise and origin of different nations, and of their most ancient records.

ALL the enquiries we make into antiquity, and the testimony of all histories which have reached us, confirm the truth of what is related in scripture; such strong evidence as this can be found in no other books. Here you may discover the true rise of different nations, which they themselves are unacquainted with: thus the Grecians, the Romans, and the rest of the people in Europe have it amongst them, that Japhet was their common founder; but here they stop, for they know

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not whence Japhet came, nor can they tell the original signification of his name, * which is not to be understood in their language, though it is very emphatical in that of the Hebrews. Why are the Greeks called Ionians, or why is that country which they inhabit in Asia called Ionia? If we ask the people themselves, they can give us no answer: whereas, if we search into scripture, there we may find that people to be the descendants of † Ion one of Japhet's sons. In like manner, if we desire the Egyptians to inform us, who it is they worship under the name of Jupiter Hammon; instead of giving a satisfactory answer, they only intertain us with a parcel of fabulous stories. But if we consider a little the sacred writings, we shall find this Hammon, with a little alteration, ‡ to be Ham, or Cham, Noah's third son, whose posterity first peopled Egypt, which by the ancients || was called Chamia. More observations of this nature might be made, but what has been already said, seems sufficient for our purpose.

A R T. III.

The scriptures proved to be true from the general traditions of all nations, especially by that particular period of time, to which these traditions are brought.

ALL nations, have preserved some general traditions amongst them, and these, though they are frequently overclouded with fable and fiction, yet I cannot help considering them as the most precious remains of ancient truth. When we consult, we find that every nation had some sort of idea of the creation of the world; that it was a rude chaos; and afterwards brought to that beauty and order which we now behold; that in the first age innocence, with happiness attending her,

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* Gen. ix. 27.

† ךך in Hebrew text is punctuated Iävan, but taking away the points which are posterior to the next, 'tis ךך.

‡ Gen. x. 24.

|| Gen. x. 6.

reigned alone, that guilt, followed by misery, had made its way into the succeeding age. They had some notion too of a general deluge, from which so few were saved, and those few preserved by means of the ark: nor do they seem to have been ignorant how the world was repopled by one man who had survived the ruin of the old world, and seen the beginning of the new one. Upon this account we find him represented with a double face, and they have preserved his true name, without knowing it. The name of Janus, used by the Gentiles, is the same as Noah, * and both of these names have the same original signification mentioned in scripture.

They knew likewise his three sons, amongst whom the world was divided: they feigned them to be the sons of Saturn, who shared amongst themselves the empire of the world. They had a perfect knowledge also of that lofty tower which presumptuous mortals attempted to raise to such a height, that they highly offended God, who shewed marks of his displeasure, and obliged them to desist from their foolish design. And here end those general traditions, which have been preserved by all nations, and notwithstanding the many rude and barbarous hands through which they have passed, yet let them be stripped of their fictitious dress, and you will find they contain a history exactly agreeing with that in the scripture.

After this last event, no other was universally known to all nations: what other reason can be assigned for this, but that of the confusion of tongues? this broke off that union and correspondence hitherto kept up amongst those separate families who were the founders of different nations. They now became strangers to each other, and did not know, nor did they concern themselves with what was transacted in any country besides their own.

Hence we see that even the most ancient and wonderful part of scripture is demonstrated to be true from the universal consent of all nations, especially those who are utter strangers to the scripture. For it is plain that those

* Gen. v. 29.

those general traditions must be founded upon truth, since, notwithstanding the distance of countries, and the diversity of language and manners, they have still subsisted the same in all nations.

When we consider the particular period of time at which these traditions end, this becomes another proof of the truth of the scriptures; because we plainly see, that before the rise of different languages, men in general made but one great family, the head of which was Noah, * who lived three hundred and fifty years after the deluge; that he retained an historical knowledge of the world as well as of religion; and that he has confirmed the truth of what is revealed to us concerning the division of languages, and the dispersion of families. This is the reason and no other plausible one can be given, why the correspondence amongst mankind should cease, and the thread of general history break off at this precise time.

What has been said, greatly heightens that regard which I have always conceived for the scriptures; and, indeed, how can it be otherways, since I find my belief, instead of being weakened, is greatly confirmed by human evidence.

A R T. IV. .

Moses proved to be the author of those books called by his name.

IT appears manifest, that Moses was perfectly instructed in the history of the first ages, since all nations confirm the truth of his relation; I cannot, therefore, withhold my assent when he tells us, what he has seen and done. It might suffice to convince us, that Moses is the author of these books, to be assured of it by the Jews, who have always looked upon them, as the foundation of their public worship; and as their religion was formed, when they entered the promised land,

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Moses

* Gen. ix. 28.

Moses himself must have instructed them when they were in the wilderness.

But besides this testimony of the whole body of a people, and the establishment of divine worship; it is plain, that Moses always speaks in his own person, that he was present and was a principal actor in most of what he relates, having finished his history before the people passed over the river Jordan to go to Palestine. In short, it will lead us into the most ridiculous absurdities, if we believe any other than Moses to have been the author of these books.

A R T. V.

More arguments brought to prove the divinity of these books.

THE character of the Jews, as it is drawn in the scriptures, is another proof of their divinity. They are represented as an ungrateful, stupid, rebellious, impious, idolatrous, murmuring race of men; who never return to their duty but when driven by severity, and when they are used mildly, they never fail to run into their former crimes. There are reproaches thrown against them, but nothing equal to the wickedness of which they have been guilty. In short, the whole of Moses's history seems to be a perfect recital of the crimes of that untractable people. Whence comes it then, that this history should be held in so much esteem, as to be thought divine by that very people to whom it is so unfavourable? The reason at once appears, which is, that the miracles, which God wrought, to stamp an authority upon Moses, and to be a testimony of his mission, are so numerous and so evident, that they strike the most incredulous wretches, and force them to acknowledge their irresistible truth.

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A. R. T. (VI.)

The truth of the miracles which are related in the books of Moses.

THERE are so many of these miracles, that they can hardly be numbered, and all of them represented to have been performed before the whole people, nay a great many of them too done in presence of the Egyptians. However, I shall take notice only of some of them, these carrying so much evidence along with them, that they can scarcely be doubted: not but the rest are well supported; but as the consideration of all would be too tedious for my present purpose, for this reason I shall confine myself to a few.

Moses, in obedience to the Almighty's orders, foretold, that Pharaoh, for his obstinacy, should meet with a severe punishment, which would force him to allow, nay to entreat the Israelites * to quit his dominions; that all the first-born, from the highest to the lowest of the Egyptians, should in one night be put to death by the destroying angel; but of the Israelites, all those should remain without hurt, who had sacrificed the paschal lamb in the foregoing night, and taken care to stain the gates of their houses with blood. Every particular circumstance happened as it was foretold; for the destruction was general, and the Israelites alone escaped: So great was the consternation amongst the Egyptians, that they besought the Hebrews to begone immediately, and it was by this means they obtained their liberty.

A little time afterwards, the Israelites are in the greatest jeopardy; on the one side being hemm'd in by the sea, which stopped their flight; on the other hand pursued by the formidable squadrons of King Pharaoh, who had overtaken them in the wilderness: but behold, they are delivered by a most astonishing miracle. Moses commanded the sea, which obeyed, and divided

* Exod. xi. 5.

divided its waters, so that it gave the people a free passage; but when they had passed, the sea immediately shut itself up again; and the Egyptians, who pursued, were swallowed up in the deep, their bodies were cast ashore, and the wreck furnished the Israelites with arms which they stood in need of.

If these two miracles are not true; whence comes it, that they are believed to be so, by more than six hundred thousand men who must have known the contrary, that there was nothing miraculous either in their departure from Egypt, or their deliverance in the wilderness? whence comes it, that all the reproaches thrown out against the Israelites, for their disobedience and murmuring, are founded upon the truth of these miracles? whence comes it, that they submitted to a religion so full of strictness, threatening and severity, the divinity of which is proved by those miracles, which, if false, they must have known to be so? If the destruction of all the first-born is not true, whence comes it then, that the passover, the most important and solemn of all their festivals, should be instituted in remembrance of that event? How can we account for that efficacy which they imputed to the paschal lamb; or after what manner shall we solve that wonderful passage thro' the red sea? In short we must be determined to assent to nothing, if we do not perceive, that in such circumstances as these, the very doubting them must be absurd and unreasonable.

Fifty days after the deliverance of the Israelites, God gave them the law upon Mount Sinai, with an appearance so full of majesty and awfulness, that Moses * himself was struck with terror. All the people beheld the fire which blazed from the top of the mountain; they all heard that terrible voice which pronounced aloud the ten commandments of the law. What can we say in opposition to evidence so strong, to testimonies so numerous, to facts so glaringly evident, and to a history which relates so particularly these circumstances? or what shall we say to their religion, which has kept sacred the

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the memory of that great event by a solemn feast, which is that of Pentecost?

A pillar of cloud by day is said to have kept them from the scorching heat of the sun, and a pillar of fire served to direct them in their way by night; and this is supposed to have been a lasting and regular miracle; had it not been true, can we imagine it would have been believed to be so by two millions of spectators? The whole people on their march were guided by this pillar, they incamped, decamped, and took all their motions from its directions; can we imagine all this could be done if they really had not seen that pillar? These are none of those short-lived events, which allow us no time for examination, but at once confound us with sudden surprize, and leave a strong impression on the imagination of men of little attention; the miracles we have taken notice of, had a continuation of forty years, and the most incredulous, with their greatest efforts, could never discover the least appearance of artifice in them.

But I will confine myself to one fact more, the truth of which is not only in itself indisputable, but it likewise becomes a corroborating proof of all the rest; I mean that tumultuous sedition which was raised against Moses, whom a party of the Israelites would no longer obey, nor would they any longer acknowledge Aaron for their high priest. The leading men in this revolt were * Korah, of the same tribe with Moses, together with Dathan and Abiram, heads of the tribe of Reuben, Jacob's eldest son. These † were supported by the favour of the people, and the defection looked every moment as if it would prove universal. Moses accompanied with Aaron and the chief rulers, advanced to the tents of the revolters, and spoke thus to the whole people: “ ‡ Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of theirs, lest ye be consumed in all their sins. Soon shall ye know, whe-
“ ther

* Numb. xxvi. 9. and Deut. xi. 6.

† Numb. xvi. 2,—4.

‡ Numb. xvi. 25. &c.

“ther the Lord has sent me to do all these things, or
 “if I have done them of my own mind. If these die
 “the common death of all men, or if they be visited
 “after the visitation of all men; then the Lord hath
 “not sent me: but if the Lord make a new thing,
 “and the earth open her mouth, and swallow them
 “up, with all that appertain unto them, and they go
 “down quick into the pit; then ye shall understand that
 “these revolvers have provoked the Lord. And it
 “came to pass, as he had made an end of speaking
 “these words, that the ground clave asunder that was
 “under them: and the earth opened her mouth and
 “swallowed them up, and all that appertained unto them.
 “They went down alive into the pit, and the earth
 “closed upon them; and they perished from amongst
 “the congregation. And all Israel that were round
 “about them fled at the cries of them; for they were
 “afraid lest they should be swallowed up as guilty al-
 “so”.

Who then can doubt the evidence of a testimony like
 this, of the divinity of Moses's mission; a testimony
 so public, and at the same time so much beyond the
 common course of nature? What else but this irresistible
 evidence could make the tribe of Reuben to acknow-
 ledge the divinity of a book, wherein the revolt and
 punishment of their heads is related in so disgraceful a
 manner? what else could oblige the posterity of Korah,
 invested with authority in the tribe of Levi, to preserve
 a history which threw so much shame upon their founder,
 by representing him put to death for his impiety? Such
 a miraculous fact as this, adds a new degree of truth to
 all the other miracles; it is of itself sufficient to give a
 divine authority to all that Moses has done or taught;
 nay it is contradictory to reason, to demand proofs for
 what he has related concerning the creation of the
 world, and what has followed to his own time, since
 he was sent from God, and all that he says and does is
 according to the Almighty's orders.

C H A P.

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CHAP. II.

Certainty of the miracles under Joshua. Certainty of the miracles in the time of Elias. Certainty of the miracles in the time of Isaiah. Compleat proof of the truth of miracles, and the consequence we draw from thence of the truth of religion, and of those books which contain it. Essential relation of the books of scripture to one another: essential relation of the miraculous facts, which establish their authority.

ART. I.

Certainty of the miracles under Joshua.

THE miracles which God wrought to establish the authority of Joshua, the successor of Moses, add, if possible, a new degree of certainty to all that Moses has done or written, since these new prodigies have no other end but to confirm the old. I should content myself with observing two, which none can dispute, if they have any remains of sincerity or modesty.

The river Jordan, * which the Israelites were to pass in order to enter into the promised land, was swoln, and had overflown its banks, as it always happens in harvest time. Joshua ordered the ark of the covenant to proceed, † and the priests, who bore it, to enter into the channel of the river, and stop in the midst until all the people were passed over. He † assured this people the day before, that God would work a great miracle, and would separate the river to make them cross over on dry land: and he commands the twelve tribes to make choice of twelve persons, who should represent them, and load themselves in passing over the river with twelve large stones taken from its bed, in order to raise a monument in the place where they encamped after their passage; reserving to himself the care of raising a like monument in the channel of Jordan after it was dry, and of forming it of as many stones as there were tribes. All answers

* Jos. iii. 5. † Jos. iii. 8. and iv. 10.

† Ibid. iii. 5, et seqq.

answers the prediction. As soon as the priests who bore the ark had wet their feet in the brink of Jordan, the waters of the river divided themselves above and below. A part flowed away according to their natural course, and the other was sustained to such a prodigious height, that they discovered it from distant cities. The two monuments were raised: one in the midst of Jordan, and the other in the place where they passed the night. After the people were safe, the waters took their ordinary course: and the miracle happened on the tenth of the first month. What can be said in opposition to this miracle? Two millions of persons were witnesses of it; the monuments that were then raised confirm it; and parents by shewing them to their children, informed them of the occasion: * and thus was the memory of a miracle preserved, which confirmed that of the passage thro' the red sea.

Every one knows how the city of Jericho was delivered to the Israelites, and by what miracle its walls were thrown down, after the ark of the covenant, preceded by one part of the Israelites, and followed by the other, † had been carried seven days successively round its walls. This miracle had been foretold: it happened in every body's presence. All circumstances concurred to manifest the power of God, and such a public fact dissipates absolutely all the clouds of diffidence and suspicion.

A R T II.

Certainty of the miracles in the time of Elias.

THE same may be said of several other proofs of the divinity of the religion of the Jews, and of the books which contain it; proofs so public and convincing, as it is impossible to weaken them by any reasonable objection.

The prophet Elias, after having reproached the king of Israel for his idolatry, spoke to him thus: “† As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain three years, but accord-

* Jos. iv. 21.

† Jos. vi. &c.

‡ 1 Kings xvii. 1.

“ing to my word.” The effect followed the menace ; during three years and a half, not a drop of dew fell on the earth : and after this interval, Elias shewing himself with courage to the prince, who ordered him to be sought for every where, that he might take away his life, bad him assemble all the people on mount Carmel, together with all the prophets of Baal, * whose worship that impious king had preferred to that of the true God.

When the people were assembled, Elias reproached him with his ingratitude, and with dividing his worship betwixt the true God and Ball, and proposed to him a sure method of knowing which of the two deserved adoration. I am alone, said he ; the prophets of Baal are to the number of four hundred and fifty ; let two victims be given to them and me, neither they nor I shall put fire to the sacrifice, and let that God, who will consume with fire from heaven the victim offered to him, be acknowledged the only true God. The proposal was accepted : the false prophets invoked to no purpose a deaf and dumb deity. But as soon as Elias had pronounced these words, † “Hear me, O Lord, hear me, “ that this people may know that thou art the Lord God, “ and that thou hast turned their hearts back again ;” the fire ‡ fell from heaven and consumed, not only the victim, but the stones of the altar, the earth round it, and the water with which the ditch, that served it as an enclosure, was full, being come from that which the prophet had thrown in abundance three several times upon the victim and the altar.

The consequence of this miracle was, that the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal were put to death by the people whom they had deceived ; || rain fell in abundance at the prayer of Elias ; so that this prophet was forced to seek his security in the desert to avoid the rage of Jezabel, who had the design of revenging by his death that of the priests of Baal. All these facts so important, united, and public, must have great weight with fair and impartial judgments : and as they cannot be certain in themselves, without being proofs of religion ;

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gion ;

* 1 Kings xvii. 17. † Ibid. xviii. 37. ‡ vers. 38. || vers. 29.

gion; as soon as we believe them, we cannot refuse to look upon the religion of the Jews as divinely instituted, and their books as the sacred repositories.

A R T. III.

Certainty of the miraeles in the time of Isaiah.

I Should never have done, were I to expatiate at large upon all the facts which contain this double proof; and being indubitable in themselves, are divine testimonies of religion, and of the books in which it is delivered. I shall confine myself to the miraculous defeat of the army of * Sennacherib. He was king of the Assyrians, and one of the most powerful that this nation ever had. He besieged Jerusalem with a formidable army. This city alone remained in the power of Hezekiah king of Judah, all the others having been taken or surrendered; and it was reduced to extremity by the length of the siege, famine and sickness having joined with other calamities. Yet Isaiah always assured the king, that God would destroy the Assyrian army, and according to his prediction, the angel of the Lord slew in one night a hundred and eighty five thousand men. Sennacherib retired almost alone, † with shame and confusion, and was slain at last himself, as Isaiah had foretold. This miracle was known to all the neighbouring nations, and the fame of it was such, that they ‡ came from all parts to offer sacrifice at Jerusalem, and congratulate Hezekiah for so miraculous a protection. It is impossible to contradict so public a fact, unless we refuse all belief to the best attested histories, written by contemporary authors, who were so well informed, and concerned even in the transactions they relate, whose narration is respected by a whole people, not only as sincere, but as constituting a part of their religion, and as having always been looked upon as such by their forefathers.

A R T.

* Isa. xxxvi. 37. † Ibid. xxxvii. 7. & 38.

‡ 2 Chron. xxxii. 2.

A R T. IV.

Compleat proof of the truth of miracles, and the consequence which is thence drawn in favour of the truth of religion, and of the books which contain it.

TO render this proof of miracles compleat, I would fain ask a person that hesitates to submit, How he would have religion to be proved to him? Natural proofs persuade him not; he will have extraordinary ones. If they can be explained by reason, and accounted for by ordinary methods, he looks upon them as insufficient, because there is nothing wonderful or supernatural in them. If they transcend all natural power, he becomes diffident, and cannot believe them. Let him therefore listen to witnesses, and chuse them. Does he require they should have been present at the facts; that they had been actors; that they had wrote themselves; that their books had been repositied in the public archives; that a whole nation should be security for their truth; that they should revere them, as part of their religion: that divine and inspired men should attest their truth; and work miracles themselves to prove the truth of their mission? I will allow him all these conditions, because I find them all united in the witnesses who depose in favour of the scriptures. And I ask of him after this, Whether he requires so many things to be assured of the truth of many facts, of which he does not doubt? and whether it be not very unjust and unreasonable to be obstinate in doubting still of what is proved to him by witnesses, who add to all the possible degrees of human authority, an addition of divine authority by their own miracles; miracles as sure and as public, as those which they attest.

A R T. V.

Essential relation of the books of scripture to one another ; essential relation of the miraculous facts which establish their authority.

THIS is a point of great consequence. All the books of scripture are mutually connected, and dependent on one another. The facts which appear the most extraordinary in the first, are related as indubitable in the following books. The miracles of the latter prophets are wrought by men persuaded of the verity of those in past ages. We must necessarily believe or reject all. One single prophet of the latter ages, acknowledged as such, suffices to establish the authority of all those who preceded him. One miracle wrought by him is enough to prove the others ; because it is with this view he does it. Thus a man who doubts of a part, doubts of the whole : and as it is very unreasonable to doubt without having just motives, a person that is not certain of the verity of scriptures, must upon each fact, upon each event, upon each miracle, have reason to invalidate the truth of them ; because general conjectures decide nothing, and the certainty of one miraculous fact overthrows them all.

What an interprize must this be ! to demonstrate in detail that of all the miracles related by contemporary authors, (who were very exact and faithful in all other things) and looked upon as indubitable by a whole nation who had been witnesses of the facts, there is not so much as one that is true, or at least sufficiently certain ? What a blindness to pretend to be better instructed in what we have not seen, than all those who were spectators, and had a great share in what they relate ? What an impiety is it, to refuse to God the power of doing things above the laws of nature ? What a contradiction to demand supernatural proofs, and to refuse to believe them, merely because they are supernatural ? What an advantage is it for religion to have so many witnesses, who support one another by successive miracles ; who are ready to

to sacrifice their lives, and lay them down in effect to attest the truth of those miracles: and to have none for enemies but men who doubt because they please to do so, and who oppose to the most certain proofs nothing but an irrational diffidence.

But tho' such a diffidence, so visibly unjust, should have some pretence in relation to miraculous facts; what grounds can it have in regard to the prophecies whose proofs subsist, and of which we can of ourselves be assured?

C H A P. III.

What prophecies are meant here: we may consider three degrees in them. The accomplishment of the first prophecies served to raise an expectation of the accomplishment of those which were distant, and the accomplishment of the distant prophecies confirmed the first. Particular proofs of the prophecies of Isaiah. From the verity of Isaiah's prophecies, we conclude necessarily that all his words are divine.

A R T. I.

What prophecies are meant here: we may consider three degrees in them.

I Do not pretend to speak here of those prophecies whose interpretation may be disputed, and their accomplishment be looked upon as doubtful, because they have an object about which the Jews are not agreed. I speak only of those which are limited to historical facts, and whose accomplishment is certain.

These I distinguish into three degrees. Some of them have been accomplished a little after they were published: the others have had their accomplishment somewhat later; but the prophets who pronounced them, saw the event. The last had a more distant object, and which exceeded the prophet's life: but the different things which he foretold, had such a connection with one another, that the most distant bordered pretty near upon some others, whose accomplishment was preparatory to the last.

A R T. II.

The first prophecies served to raise an expectation of those which were distant : and the accomplishment of the distant prophecies confirmed the first.

IF the prophets had only foretold very distant events, the world must have expected a long time to know whether they were prophets; and they could have no authority during their lives.

If on the other hand they had only foretold very near events, we might have suspected them to have been instructed by natural means, and the persuasion that they spoke by the inspiration of God, would have been greatly weakened.

And had there not been a strict connection betwixt the near and distant events by means of prophecies, which were to be accomplished in the intervals; the distance betwixt the two extremities would have destroyed the fruit of the predictions, the first being forgotten, and the latter not being expected.

By the accomplishment of the first, the prophet acquired a lawful authority, and raised an expectation of the completion of the others. The latter added to his authority an entire certainty that his light came from God; and that all which had been revealed to him concerning more distant times, would be as infallibly fulfilled as what he had foretold in respect to times that were near. The public records attested what had been accomplished: instruction instilled the knowledge of it into children; and these joining what happened in their days to what had passed during the lives of their fathers, left to their posterity a profound respect for the prophets who had foretold such things, and a firm hope that all which was contained in their predictions would be accomplished.

Thus it was that their books deserved to be looked upon as divine. The proof was clear, and within every body's reach. They believed what was to be in futurity, because they saw the present. They were persuaded

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* Jer. xxvii.
† Isa. viii.

ed that the prediction was divine, because it was infallible, and above all human knowledge. And people would have concluded quite the contrary, if some events had not answered the prophecies. “ * Nevertheless, “ hear thou now this word (says the prophet Jeremiah “ to a man who pretended to be sent by God) that I “ speak in thine ears, and in the ears of all the people. “ The prophets that have been before me, and before “ thee of old, prophesied both against many countries, “ and against great kingdoms, of war, and of evil, and “ of pestilence. The prophet which prophesieth of “ peace, when the word of the prophet shall come to “ pass, then shall the prophet be known, that the Lord “ hath truly sent him.”

This is the only rule they observed ; it was plain and easy. The lowest people might make the application of it, as well as the most learned ; for there was no possibility of a mistake. Now let us see, whether this rule being applied to the prophecies, which constitute so considerable a part of the holy scriptures, demonstrates their truth. I shall begin with those of Isaiah.

A R T. III.

Particular proofs of the truth of Isaiah's prophecies.

THE kings of Syria † and Israel, who separately had done great damage to the kingdom of Judah, united together absolutely to destroy it ; and came to lay siege to Jerusalem. At the first news of this confederacy, Ahaz king of Judah was seized with fear, and all the people with him. Isaiah upon this came to assure ‡ him in public, that the enterprize of these two kings should be frustrated ; that in a short time, they would both die ; and that before a child, that was to be born in about ten months, could say father and mother, Damascus the capital of Syria, and Samaria the capital of the kingdom of Israel, should be subject to the king of the Assyrians. The event justified the prophecy in all its parts, tho' it was without any natural probability.

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* Jer. xxviii. 7, &c.

† Isa. vii. 1, 2,—16.

‡ Isa. viii. 2, 3, 4. 2 Kings xv. 29, 30. Ibid. xvi. 29.

We have seen with what certainty he promised some years after to Hezekiah, that God would miraculously destroy the prodigious army of Sennacherib; and how it was exterminated in one night, when even the safety of Jerusalem was despaired of.

But this great event had been revealed to him a long time before it happened. He had seen in spirit the army of the Assyrians * like to a river that overflows, drowning the whole country, and leaving nothing but the head, which was Jerusalem: all the rest was carried away, as it were with the flood.

He had foretold the coming of Sennacherib, in time of peace and tranquillity. He had observed his march, his places of rest, his camps, before he thought of leaving his own country. He shall pass, says he, like a torrent † before such a city. He shall make his stay in another. He shall leave his heavy baggage in a third. He shall arrive too soon at the last to stop there. He shall hasten to arrive before the day is spent to the place from whence he may discover Jerusalem; and he will threaten it with the scornful motion of his hand. He had foreseen and written, at that time, ‡ that this formidable army should be destroyed by a supernatural power, as that of the Midianites had been in the time of Gideon, and that of the Egyptians in the time of Moses.

He had pointed out, more than once, the circumstances of this prodigy; that it should happen in the night; that, in the morning, the siege of Jerusalem would appear as a dream ||, that God would stifle the army of the Assyrians by an enflamed vapour; that this night should be like to that wherein the angel struck all the first-born of Egypt to save the Israelites; that the noise of thunder which was to roll over the Assyrians, should be to Jerusalem ** an harmonious sound, and like a melodious concert, because it would be followed with public thanksgivings.

It was these predictions, so precise and circumstantiated, that supported the hope of Hezekiah, in spite of

* Isa. viii. 7, 8.

† Isa. x. 28, &c.

‡ Isa. x. 26.

§ Isa. x. xix. 6, 7, 8.

** Isa. xxx. 31, 32, 29.

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* Isa. xxx.

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1 Esdr. iv. 2

|| Isa. lii. 2

all that seemed to oppose it. And we are not to be astonished, that after their accomplishment, this holy king, with all his people, was persuaded, that Isaiah was a prophet, to whom God revealed his designs, and that he spoke not but by his order.

The king of Babylon, whom the scripture calls Merodach-baladan *, having sent ambassadors to Hezekiah to congratulate him, that after having been sick to death he had recovered his health, and perhaps likewise to get exact information concerning the retrogradation of the shadow on the sun-dial of his palace; this prince, pleased with this honour, shewed those ambassadors all the treasures he had: and when they were gone, Isaiah, to whom God had shewn the secret pride of the heart of Hezekiah, came to tell him from God †, that all these treasures should be conveyed to Babylon; that princes born of his blood should be made captives, and that they should be employed by the conqueror in menial offices.

This whole prediction was contrary to probability. The king of Babylon and Hezekiah were then allies, and united in interest. The former seemed no way formidable in comparison of the kings of Assyria, whose yoke he had but just shaken off, and to whom he was, perhaps, still tributary ‡. And yet the prophecy is positive, and the prince made no doubt of it. It was literally accomplished, and then they hoped for their return from captivity, which the same prophet had foretold many times, and in very magnificent terms. " Shake thyself from the dust ||: arise, and sit down, O Jerusalem: loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion. Go * ye forth of Babylon: flee ye from tehe Chaldeans, with a voice of singing, declare ye, tell this, utter it even to the ends of the earth: say ye, The Lord hath redeemed his servant Jacob. Thus saith the Lord, your redeemer, the ho-

* Isa. xxxix. and 2 Kings xx.

† Isa. xxxix. 5, 6, 7.

‡ It appears that the Assyrians preserved some authority at Babylon, since Assar-Haddan, after Sennacherib, sent inhabitants, either from Babylon itself, or from his territory to Samaria.

1 Esdr. iv. 2. 2 Kings xvii. 4.

|| Isa. lii. 2. ** Ibid. xlii. 14.

“ly One of Israel, for your sake I have sent to Babylon, and have brought down all their nobles.”

The prophet does still more; he marks out the conqueror of Babylon, and the deliverer of the Jews by name; and thus God speaks by the mouth of his servant: “* I am the Lord that maketh all things, that confirmeth the word of his servant, and performeth the council of his messengers, that saith to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be inhabited; and to the cities of Judah, Ye shall be built. That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure. † Thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him: and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two-leaved gates, and the gates shall not be shut. I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron. That thou mayest know that I the Lord, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel. I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me. I am the Lord, and there is none else, there is no God besides me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me. That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none besides me, I am the Lord and there is none else. ‡ And who as I, shall call, and shall declare it, and set it in order for me, since I appointed the ancient people? and the things that are coming, and shall come: let them shew them unto them. || I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth: I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain: I the Lord speak righteousness, I declare things that are right.”

Who is it that revealed to Isaiah (who died so many years before the birth of Cyrus) the name of this prince, his conquests, the taking of Babylon, his affection for the Jews, and the liberty which he restored them? Sure such a glorious prophecy ought to triumph over all incredulity.

* Isa. xlv. 24. &c.

‡ Isa. xlv. 7.

† Ibid. xlv. 1. &c.

|| Ibid. xlv. 19.

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* Isa. xlviii

† Ibid. xlii

The same prophet clearly declares the ruin of Babylon, after having seen in spirit all the splendor and glory which it had under the reign of Nebuchadnezzar;

“ * Come down and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon, sit on the ground : there is no throne, O daughter of the Caldeans. And thou saidst, I shall be a lady for ever : I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children. But these two things shall come to thee in a moment in one day. Stand now with thine enchantments, if so be thou shalt be able to profit, and if so be thou mayest prevail. Let now the astrologers, the star-gazers, the monthly prognosticators stand up, and save thee from these things that shall come upon thee. † The noise of a multitude in the mountains, like as of a great people : And Babylon the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation : neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there, neither shall the shepherds make their fold there. For wild beasts of the desert shall lie there, and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures, and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there. ‡ For I will rise up against them, saith the Lord of hosts, and cut off from Babylon the name, and remnant, and son and nephew, saith the Lord. I will also make it a possession for the bittern, and pools of water : and I will sweep it with the besom of destruction, saith the Lord of hosts. The Lord of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand.”

It is astonishing with what exactness all the parts of this prophecy were accomplished. Babylon ceased from that time to be a metropolis. It was afterwards dispeopled, by the new cities of Selucia and Ctesiphon, that were built with this design in its neighbourhood. Its walls served no longer, but for an inclosure to an unwholesome

* Isa. xlvii. 1, 7, 8, 9, 12, 13.

† Ibid. xiii. 4, 19, 20, 21, &c.

‡ Ibid. xiv. 22, 23, 24.

wholesome and desert place, of which the kings of Persia made a park for hunting. The neglected walls fell to decay. The Euphrates, which formerly divided the city, having no longer a free passage, because of the ruins, made itself a new channel at some distance from its old bed. A weak rivulet, which still ran there, not finding a proper issue, made an inaccessible lake and morass. And the most skillful geographers cannot mark out at this day, with certainty, the place where Babylon stood; so strictly the oath which God made, that he would raze the very traces of it, has been executed.

A R T. IV.

From the verity of the prophecies of Isaiah, we necessarily conclude that all his words are divine.

I Stop here to ask, whether, after so many clear and connected proofs that Isaiah was a prophet, any one can reasonably look upon him otherways? whether it be making a right use of reason, to resist such a clear evidence? and whether we can refuse to look upon his predictions as divine, when we are once forced to acknowledge them as certain.

For there is no medium: from the verity of the words of Isaiah, we necessarily conclude they must be divine, because he always professes himself to be inspired; because he never speaks in his own name; because it is always God, if we may believe him, who speaks by his mouth; and he assures us, that he is only God's ambassador and minister. We must either contest all with him, or grant him all; and if we receive his prophecies, we can no longer doubt but his books are divine. The same may be said of all the other prophets. All speak in the name of the Lord. They only listen to him, and repeat what he says, in the very terms he suggests to them. And if we believe them sincere, we must pay the same respect to their words as to God's.

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This remark may serve likewise for the prophet Jeremiah, and all the others, whose predictions can never be accounted certain, except they are allowed to be divine; and we need no more repeat this observation.

CHAP. IV.

Particular proofs of the verity of the prophecies of Jeremiah. Why God revealed to Jeremiah what was to happen to all the nations known by the Jews. Continuation of the proofs of the verity of the prophecies of Jeremiah. Three important observations on Jeremiah.

ART. I.

Particular proofs of the verity of the prophecies of Jeremiah.

Jeremiah began his public ministry under Josiah king of Judah, a very religious prince, but whose children imitated not his piety. Pharaoh * king of Egypt was then very powerful. He had almost subjected † intirely all the provinces to the Euphrates; and it was by conducting his army towards that river, against the king of the Assyrians, that he defeated Josiah, and killed this prince who rashly opposed his passage.

At his return he deposed one of the sons of Josiah ‡, whom the people had put on the throne: he carried him captive into Egypt, where he died; and he placed in his room, Jehoiakim his elder brother.

It therefore seems, as if Judea had the justest reason to fear on the side of Egypt; yet Jeremiah begins his prophecy by declaring, that their calamities should || come from the north; whereas Egypt lay to the south;

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* He was surnamed Nechoh, 2 Kings xxxiii. 29.

† This appears by 2 Kings xxiv. 7.

‡ His name was Jehoaz, 2 Kings xxiii. 32.

|| Jer. iv. 6, 7.

and thus he clearly signifies Chaldeā, and the kingdom of Babylon *, tho', at that time, every thing appeared calm and peaceable towards that quarter: " † Because thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war. Destruction upon destruction is cried; how long shall I see the standard, and hear the sound of the trumpet? The voice of the daughter of Zion, that she bewaileth herself."

No one could perceive any probability of those disasters, and therefore they were not believed. But the prediction ‡ of an extraordinary famine, which laid waste the country, the commination of which the false prophet had despised, was a convincing proof of the certainty of the others.

From the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim, Jeremiah declared || to this prince, and to the queen, that they should be enslaved, and that the king of Egypt, who had placed them on the throne, should not hinder another from deposing them.

He was not listened to, and they flattered themselves that Jehoaz, who was a prisoner in Egypt, would be sent back with honour. But the prophet assured them §, that there he would die, as he really did.

In the fourth year of the reign of Jehoiakim, the prophecy of Jeremiah against him was justified by the event. He was ** obliged to receive the yoke of the king of Babylon; and because he had the temerity to affect independency after a servitude of three years, he was reduced †† to absolute slavery, and clapt in chains to be carried to Babylon; whether they did not afterwards think it worth their while to carry him; for the conqueror took away his life, and even refused him burial ‡‡, as Jeremiah had foretold him in express terms, and repeated at different times.

The king of Babylon put Coniah, son of Jehoiakim, upon the throne of his father. But Jeremiah foretold immediately,

* Jer. xx. 4. † Jer. iv. 19, 21, 31.

‡ Ibid. xiv. 1, &c. || Jer. xiii. 18, 19.

§ Jer. xxii. 11, 12. Shallum and Jehoaz were two names of the same prince.

** 2 Kings xxiv. 1. †† 2 Chron. ‡‡ Jer. xxx. 30.

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immediately *, that his reign would be short; that he and his mother would be exiles in Babylon; and that this prince would be looked upon as sterile †, because not one of his children, nor even of his posterity, should ever sit upon the throne of David.

This prediction was exactly accomplished. None of the descendants of Coniah ever took upon them the quality of kings ‡, even after their return from Babylon. And the kings which the Jews had from that time, were no longer of the house of David.

Nebuchadrezzar || put Zedekiah, his uncle by the father's side, in the place of Coniah. And every one thought, that this new reign would be more happy than the preceeding; and that God would make a great difference betwixt those whom he had left in the inheritance of their fathers under the prince of their nation, and those whom he had banished to Babylon under a foreign government.

But Jeremiah § assured the contrary: he said, that the banished persons should return into their country; that those who had remained in their own land should perish by a thousand accidents, and that Zedekiah should be more unhappy than his predecessor, whose servitude should be softened, whereas the misery of the other should find no consolation.

The event answered the prediction **. The banished persons were recalled in time: those who had remained in Judea were almost all exterminated: Coniah was set at liberty, and treated very honorably by the successor of Nebuchadnezzar: and Zedekiah, on the contrary, after having seen his children slain ††, had his eyes pulled out, and finished his life in chains.

Is it possible, after so many prophecies, that followed each other so closely, and related to four princes of the house of David, immediate successors of one another,

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and

* Jer. xxii. 24, 26.

† Jer. xxii. 30.

‡ Jechonias only reigned three months and six days. Kings xxxvi. 9.

|| 2 Kings xxiv. 17, 2. 2 Chron. xxxvi. 10.

§ Jer. xxiv. 1, &c. ** Jer. lii. 31, et seqq. †† Jer. lii. 10, 11.

and the two most potent kings of foreign nations, the king of Egypt, and the king of Babylon, which were so faithfully fulfilled in the space of twenty two years*: is it possible, I say, that after such prophecies, so quickly and perfectly verified by the event, that any one should still preserve the least doubt about the other predictions of the same prophet, and hesitate to regard them as divine? Reason certainly could never suggest such a groundless suspicion: and it could only be the effect of a voluntary incredulity, of which some secret passion must be the root.

But I question whether any incredulity can resist the force of what I am now going to say, it is so public and convincing.

Jehoiakim had reigned three years at Jerusalem, † and Nebuchadrezzar had entered only into the first year of his reign in Babylon, when Jeremiah foretold that God ‡ would subject to this prince not only Jerusalem and Judea, but all the neighbouring nations, who are named in particular, || who certainly did not think at that time of changing their masters, having all of them kings who seemed well settled, and were in a condition of defending their liberties.

To render this important action more solemn, God ordered § Jeremiah to make himself chains, to wear them about his neck, and to appear thus in public, testifying by his word what they signified. He bore them thus several years, without terrifying any one by this spectacle.

But in the first days of the reign of Zedekiah, when Jerusalem was full of the ambassadors of neighbouring princes, who came to congratulate this young prince on his high elevation, Jeremiah had orders from God to present chains** to each of these ambassadors, and to order them from him to carry them to their masters, and

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* The reigns of Jehoaz, Jehoiakim, Coniah, and Zedekiah took up that space.

† In the fourth year of Jehoiakim was the first year of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon. Jer. xxv. 1.

‡ Jer. xxv. 9.

|| All these people are named in Jer. xxv. 18, to 27.

§ Jer. xxvii. 1, 2. ** Ibid.

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 “ man and the beast that are upon the ground, by my
 “ great power, and by my out-stretched arm, and have
 “ given it unto whom it seemed meet unto me. And
 “ now have I given all these lands into the hand of
 “ Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon, my servant,...
 “ and all the nations shall serve him, and his son and his
 “ son’s son, until the very time of this land come.”

How sure must he have been of the truth of his mission, to expose himself publicly to the danger of a confutation by the event ? and how inexcusable should we be, if after the event has justified all the parts of such a prophecy, we acknowledge not the spirit of God ? Jeremiah was not contented with these general predictions. * He marked out in particular the future conquests of all the nations which God had resolved to subject to the king of Babylon, and he enters into so wonderful a detail, that no history can be more exact ; and one would think he was witness of what passes, the circumstances are so faithfully represented.

A R T. II.

Why God revealed to Jeremiah what was to happen to all the nations known by the Jews.

BUT the better to feel the whole weight of such a proof of the divine mission of Jeremiah ; it is necessary to observe, that the Jews were surrounded by several nations, whose government and situation they knew, and were either their enemies or allies. They had on the south, Idumea and Egypt ; to the east, the country of the Moabites, the Ammonites, and the Arabians ; on the north, Chaldea, and Assyria ; and to the west, the cities of Sidon and Tyre, and the land of the Philistines,

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or

* Which are carried on from Jer. xlv. to lii.

or ancient Cananeans. Other nations were little known by them : and as in regard to them they were almost all beyond the seas, they were commonly comprehended under the name of Islands, or sea-coasts.

It would therefore have been useless to have chosen these unknown countries for a scene of prophecies, because the Jews would have comprehended nothing ; and it was necessary for the prophet to confine himself to those nations of which they had an exact knowledge.

This proceeding removed all possibility of covering the falsity of the predictions : and the more circumstanced they were in regard of time, place, and events, the easier it was for every body to know the truth of them.

It is upon this account that God reveals by Jeremiah what was to happen to all those nations with which Jerusalem was surrounded, and pointed out to him the minutest circumstances ; to the end that every part of the verity of his words might be made evident ; and that all the nations known by the Jews, might bear testimony of the inspiration of his prophets.

* Isaiah and Ezekiel have done the same as Jeremiah : and in order to give credit to more distant prophecies, and more interesting for salvation, they have foretold in a particular detail the temporal changes which were to happen in their time, and a few years after their death, to all the nations known to the Jews.

A R T. III.

Continuation of the verity of the prophecies of Jeremiah.

IT would be a contemptible objection, should any one pretend to reduce all the prophecies of Jeremiah concerning the nations known to the Jews to mere conjecture, grounded upon this, that he might have been acquainted with the great qualities of Nebuchadrezzar. What I have already mentioned, and the bare reading of the prophecies, are sufficient to strip this evasion of all probability.

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* Isaiah from the 13th chapter to the 22d, and Ezekiel from the 25th to the 33d.

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* Jer. x

† Jer. x

|| Ibid.

But I will consent to look upon this answer for a moment, as serious : and I ask, upon what conjecture could Jeremiah ground himself in his predictions of the liberty and return of those who were led captives to Babylon ? Upon what probability could he fix the duration of their captivity exactly to seventy years ? Upon what knowledge in policy and public affairs could he give bounds to the empire of the Babylonians, and to the posterity of Nebuchadrezzar ; fixing the duration of the empire at seventy years, and that of the descendants of Nebuchadrezzar to his grandson ? By what rules of prudence could he judge certainly and in the same day, that all the nations which he mentions in chapter the twenty-fifth, shall be subject to the king of Babylon, and that the king of Babylon himself shall drink of the same cup, filled with the wine of the wrath of God, which the prophet presents to all those people which that prince was to conquer.

* “ Therefore behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that it shall no more be said, The Lord liveth that brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt ; but, The Lord liveth that brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north.

† “ For thus saith the Lord, that after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon, I will visit you, and perform my good word towards you, in causing you to return to this place.

‡ “ And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Babylon, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations.

|| “ And now have I given all these lands into the hands of Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon, my servant. And all nations shall serve him, and his son, and his son's son, until the very time of his land come.”

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• Jer. xvi. 14. and xxiii. 7.

† Jer. xxix. 10.

|| Ibid. xxvii. 6, 7.

‡ Ibid. xxv. 11, 12.

Can any thing be less discovered by natural reason than these events, and can they be told in a more clear and positive manner?

Jeremiah * was conducted in all this by so sure a revelation, that after having foretold in two chapters at length all that regarded the ruin and destruction of Babylon, above six years before the taking of Jerusalem, he ordered a faithful person who accompanied king Zedekiah, and was going to Babylon, either to make his court there, or because he was sent thither, to read these prophecies when he came there, and to end the reading with this prayer: "† O Lord, thou hast spoken against this place to cut it off, that none shall remain in it, neither man nor beast, but thus shall it be desolate for ever. And it shall be when thou hast made an end of reading this book, that thou shalt bind a stone to it, and cast it into the midst of Euphrates. And thou shalt, say, Thus shall Babylon sink, and shall not rise from the evil that I will bring upon her."

What relation have the timid conjectures of men about future events, with prophecies of such a character, wherein the certainty of divine knowledge, and the efficacy of God's power, are so visible?

When Nebuchadrezzar besieged Jerusalem, in the time of Zedekiah, the king of Egypt ‡ came with a great army to succour him. Nebuchadrezzar raised the siege to go out to meet him; and Jeremiah being consulted in that interval, said, that the Egyptian army would signify nothing; that the king of Babylon would return to the siege, take the city, and reduce it to ashes. And he added these words, truly worthy of the majesty of God: "For though ye had smitten the whole army of the Chaldeans that fight against you, and though there remained but wounded men among them, yet should they take the city and burn it."

The same prophet, after the taking and burning of Jerusalem, having been carried by force into Egypt by those who hoped to find rest there and refuge against the king

* Jer. li. 59, &c.

† Jer. li. 59.

‡ Jer. xxxvii, 6,

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* Jer. xliii.

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‡ Jer. xxvi.

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king of Babylon, did not content himself with prophesying to them, as he had always done, that they should neither find peace nor repose, because the king of Babylon would come there and make himself master of the country; but he carried great stones under a vault, * in the place of Tahpanhes, to hide them; and he assured the Jews, that they should be taken thence to make the basis of the tribunal of Nebuchadrezzar, when he had made himself master of Egypt.

What light, and what certainty was this! and by how many proofs from the beginning to the end, are the divine mission and prophecies of this great man verified!

A R T. IV.

Three important observations on Jeremiah.

First observation.

I shall finish these proofs with three observations, which add to their certainty a new degree of evidence that nothing can darken.

The first is, That not only Jeremiah had no personal interest in exercising the ministry of a prophet, but exposed himself by so doing to continual dangers, and set against himself princes, priests, † magistrates, by his reproofs, and continual prophecies of their calamities. His own fellow-citizens in the beginning of his ministry had a mind to take away his life. He received many outrages from the person invested with the pontificate, and was cast into prison by his order. He was treated as an impious wretch, because he had foretold that the temple would be destroyed; and the priests with the grandees judged him worthy of death. † King Zedekiah put him in custody as an enemy of the public peace. The nobles ordered him to be thrown into a dungeon, || and

* Jer. xliii. 8, 9, 10.

† Jer. xi. 19, 21.

‡ Jer. xxvi. 8, 11.

|| Jer. xxxvii. 16.

Ibid. xx. 2.

Can any thing be less discovered by natural reason than these events, and can they be told in a more clear and positive manner?

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* Jer. li. 59, &c.

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* Jer. xliii

† Jer. xi.

‡ Jer. xxvi

|| Jer. xxxv

king of Babylon, did not content himself with prophesying to them, as he had always done, that they should neither find peace nor repose, because the king of Babylon would come there and make himself master of the country; but he carried great stones under a vault, * in the place of Tahpanhes, to hide them; and he assured the Jews, that they should be taken thence to make the basis of the tribunal of Nebuchadrezzar, when he had made himself master of Egypt.

What light, and what certainty was this! and by how many proofs from the beginning to the end, are the divine mission and prophecies of this great man verified!

A R T. IV.

Three important observations on Jeremiab.

First observation.

I Shall finish these proofs with three observations, which add to their certainty a new degree of evidence that nothing can darken.

The first is, That not only Jeremiah had no personal interest in exercising the ministry of a prophet, but exposed himself by so doing to continual dangers, and set against himself princes, priests, † magistrates, by his reproofs, and continual prophecies of their calamities. His own fellow-citizens in the beginning of his ministry had a mind to take away his life. He received many outrages from the person invested with the pontificate, and was cast into prison by his order. He was treated as an impious wretch, because he had foretold that the temple would be destroyed; and the priests with the grandees judged him worthy of death. † King Zedekiah put him in custody as an enemy of the public peace. The nobles ordered him to be thrown into a dungeon, || and

* Jer. xliii. 8, 9, 10.

† Jer. xi. 19, 21.

Ibid. xx. 2.

‡ Jer. xxvi. 8, 11.

|| Jer. xxxvii. 16.

and kept him there a long time: and they obtained afterwards a new order from the king to cast him into a ditch full of dirt, * and to let him die there.

But no evil treatment weakened his patience or courage; and he said to those who wanted to take his life from him, "You will spill my innocent blood, which will hasten your ruin, and the destruction of Jerusalem; for the Lord has truly sent me, and † it is by his order that I have spoken to you all that you have heard."

Second observation.

The second observation is, That the predictions of Jeremiah were opposed by false prophets, who said as well as he, that they were sent from God; and were on that account listened to by the princes and people, because they promised them what was agreeable to their desires. Upon all occasions they were preferred to Jeremiah, whose counsels were always rejected: and even to the end, delusion and incredulity prevailed over his advice. But when events had justified all his predictions, and demonstrated the falshood of the other prophets, men were then obliged to respect what they had not believed. Lies vanished, but truth remained.

Third observation.

The third observation is, That many of these false prophets were convicted of falshood by Jeremiah, in such a manner as to leave no doubt of it in the minds of the people. He said to one of them, || who had snatched from him the wooden chains which he wore about his neck, and had broken them to pieces, affirming that God would thus break in two years the yoke imposed by Nebuchadrezzar; "You have broke wooden chains, and thereby you have changed them unto chains

* Jer. xxxviii. 4, 6.

† Jer. xxvi. 15.

|| He was called Hananiah.

The whole book of the prophecies of Jeremiah is a proof, that the false prophets were more listened to than him.

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* Jer. xx

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"chains of iron. For thus says the God of Israel, the
 "Lord of armies, I have made the yoke of Nebuchad-
 "rezzar a yoke of iron, and I have put it upon the
 "necks of all nations. * It is not the Lord who com-
 "missions thee. Thou givest the people hopes that are
 "founded upon lies. Thou shalt die this year; for
 "having spoke against the revelation of God." And the
 same year, in the seventh month, that false prophet
 died.

There were at Babylon two prophets, † who promi-
 sed a speedy return to the Israelites that were captives
 with their king Jechoniah, and opposed the contrary
 predictions of Jeremiah. This prophet affirmed that
 those two seducers should be punished ‡ by God in a ter-
 rible manner, for the adulteries which they concealed
 under the mask of hypocrisy, and for their false predic-
 tions: and that Nebuchadnezzar should be the minister
 of divine vengeance, by ordering them to be thrown in-
 to boiling oil. Their punishment was public; and pas-
 sed afterwards for a curse among the Jews of Babylon.

Thus God confounded those who dared to usurp a pre-
 tended mission from him, and to profane his holy name,
 by employing it to give credit to lies; and he shewed
 the infinite difference which ought to be placed betwixt
 his word and that of men; betwixt those prophets who
 spoke by his inspiration, and those who depended on
 vain conjectures. || "The prophet that hath a dream
 "let him tell a dream, and he that hath my word let
 "him speak my word faithfully. What is the chaff to
 "the wheat, saith the Lord? Is not my word like a fire,
 "saith the Lord, and like a hammer that breaketh the
 "rock in pieces? For who hath stood in the council of
 "the Lord, and hath perceived and heard his word?
 "Who hath marked his word and heard it?" This is
 what dispersed so many fictions, that for a while opposed
 the predictions of true prophets; for they were all like
 Jeremiah, persecuted for truth, and rendered odious on
 account

* Jer. xxviii. 19. &c.

† They were called Ahab and Zedekiah.

‡ Jer. xxix. 8, 9, 21, 22, 23.

|| Jer. xxiii. 28, 29, & 31.

account of it : this preserved their prophecies, notwithstanding an almost general conspiracy to destroy them. Every thing has at length yielded to truth, and incredulity itself has contributed to establish it, by giving occasion to several prodigies, and by verifying all the menaces it had hitherto despised.

CHAP. V.

Particular proofs of the truth of the prophecy of Ezekiel.

THERE are in the prophecies of Ezekiel, as in those of Isaiah and Jeremiah, many characteristics that demonstrate their truth, and were, in regard of those who lived in his time, infallible proofs that he was sent from God, and full of his Spirit ; because his predictions were always accomplished, and the first served as so many pledges of the truth of those that were more distant.

He began to prophesy in the * fourth year of the captivity of Jehoiakin, which is likewise the fourth † of the reign of Zedekiah his successor. There did not appear at that time to be any difference betwixt this prince and the king of Babylon, who had secured his fidelity by an oath, which interest as well as religion obliged Zedekiah to keep.

But God revealed ‡ at that time to Ezekiel, that this prince, deceived by his confidence in the king of Egypt, would become perjured, and a rebel ; and that he would engage in a war, which must end in the ruin of Judea and Jerusalem.

This prophet did not barely foretell these calamities ; he employed his actions as well as his words ; he drew up himself a plan of the siege of || Jerusalem. He described the approaches, the lines, the forts raised against it ; he employed threatening gestures against it ; he

* Ezek. i. 1. † 2 Chron. xxxvi. 13.

‡ Ezek. xvii. 14. || Ibid. iv. 12, 3, 7. and xii. 2.

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* Ezek. i.

put betwixt it and himself an iron-separation, to shew in a sensible manner, that there was betwixt God and this city as it were an iron-wall, that would hinder his protection and succours; and this he did to render those attentive to such remarkable actions, who listened to vain prophecies, and were little touched with his menaces.

He was not satisfied with predicting that the siege of Jerusalem would cause a famine; he anticipated it many years, and experienced it in his own person during as many days as the besieged were to feel it. He made * bread of all kind of grains; he baked it under dirty ashes, he took of it but a small quantity a-day, and he drank water in the same proportion, only to support life. All the Hebrew captives in Babylon were witnesses of this rigorous abstinence of so long a continuance; for it lasted three hundred and ninety days: all those who had remained in Judea were informed of it. Now I would fain know how, after the event had verified all these predictions, they could refuse to look upon Ezekiel as an inspired man? or how could any one suspect of fraud and deceit those prophecies, which on one side cost the prophet so dear, and on the other were so exactly accomplished?

The same prophet, to mark in a stronger manner what was to happen to the Jews at Jerusalem, and to king Zedekiah at the end of the siege, prepared in haste at noon-day what was necessary for a speedy departure; made his moveables † and baggage be carried, as if he was going to dislodge; and towards the evening he ordered himself to be drawn out of a breach made on purpose in his house, his eyes blindfolded, and carried on the shoulders of some persons. And after such actions had attracted the curiosity and attention of every one, he declared it would be thus that the Jews would be forced to dislodge, and that it should be thus that Zedekiah should endeavour to save his life by a breach made in the wall, and that his men should carry him on their shoulders into the city ditch, after having put a bandage over his eyes, lest the sight of the precipice should startle him.

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The

* Ezek. iv. 9. & seqq.

† Ezek. xii. 7. &c.

The prophet adds, that this prince shall in vain attempt to make his escape in this manner; that he shall be caught in the net which God has spread for him, that he shall be led captive to Babylon, tho' after the loss of his sight; and that he shall die there.

History informs us *, but in a shorter detail than Ezekiel, that all this was accomplished. It is impossible but we must adore that knowledge which God has of future events, and give an entire credit to the person whom he has made so perfectly acquainted with them.

When no one perceived any appearance or probability of the siege of Jerusalem, it was present to Ezekiel; and what astonishes us is, that he had, several years before, foretold the doubt in which Nebuchadrezzar would be, if he should lay siege to Jerusalem, or to Rabbath the capital of the Ammonites. He had already described his irresolution, what means he would use to get rid of it, and to what end these means would determine him.

† “Also thou son of man, said God to the prophet, appoint thee two ways that the sword of the king of Babylon may come: both twain shall come forth out of one land, and choose thou a place, choose it at the head of the way of the city. Appoint a way, that the sword may come to Rabbath of the Ammonites, and to Judah and Jerusalem the defenced. For the king of Babylon stood at the parting of the way, at the head of the two ways, to use divination: he made his arrows bright, he consulted with images, he looked in the liver. At his right hand was the divination for Jerusalem, &c.”

What revelation can be supposed to be divine, if this be not? or who could have refused to Ezekiel the quality of a prophet, after he had seen the accomplishment of it?

The city of Tyre was, at that time, one of the richest in the world, by reason of its extensive commerce; one of the best fortified, by reason of its situation, and by the works which covered it; and less in danger of being besieged,

* See 2 Kings xxv. 4, 5, &c. and Jer. lii. 7, &c.

† Ezek. xxi. 19, &c.

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* Ezek. x

† Ezek. x

‡ Ibid.

besieged, because it was mistress of the sea by a potent fleet. Ezekiel foretold *, that Nebuchadrezzar should make himself master of it; but that the siege would be long; and to prove by what spirit he spake, he relates in these terms what God had revealed to him: "I have been well served, said the Lord to me, by the king of Babylon, and by his army, in the siege of Tyre. His soldiers suffered a great deal at it, and his troops were ruined by violent fatigues: but this service has not yet been paid for. I will give Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, Egypt for a recompence; and I will permit his army to pillage it." What a majesty is here! Who does not perceive in this stile the master of the world, and Lord of empires? The prophecy shines here the least, tho' it be wonderful and magnificent.

After the burning of Jerusalem, and the temple, and the entire ruin of the nation, the Jews, who were captives in Babylon †, lost the hopes of being re-established, and knew not what to think of the promises which God made to their fathers. Ezekiel comforted them by relating the vision, which God had shewn him, raising in his sight to life by his words, dry bones that were scattered upon the surface of the earth; the explication of which miraculous resurrection, Ezekiel communicated to them; "Bones, said the Lord to me, ‡ are the figure of what the house of Israel is reduced to; but declare to them from me, that I will open the tombs wherein they seem buried, and will re-establish them in the land which they possessed. The miracle which I have wrought in your presence, ought to prove the other; and the resurrection, I promise them, is not more wonderful or incredible, than this which you have seen."

With what respect must the Jews, after they were re-established in their country, have read this prophecy! And what confidence must they not have had in all that was promised them in time to come, by a man whom they knew to be so well enlightened, and informed of

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God's

* Ezek. xxix. 17. &c.

† Ezek. xxxvii. 11.

‡ Ibid.

God's decrees, even when they seemed void of all probability !

C H A P. VI.

*Particular proofs of the truth of the prophecy of Daniel.
We cannot suspect the prophecies of Daniel to have been
made after the event.*

A R T. I.

Particular proofs of the truth of the prophecies of Daniel.

THE whole prophecy of Daniel is filled with public and evident proofs, which succeed one another, and whose certainty is necessarily connected with that of the history.

When this prophet * was very young, the king of Babylon had a mysterious dream, of which he lost the distinct idea, and yet preserved a confused remembrance, which disquieted him. He required, that all those who passed for men of abilities, should tell him what he had forgotten, and give him the explication thereof, condemning them all to die, if they did not do it. Daniel †, who was comprehended in this general order, betook himself to prayer with three young Jews, who were exposed with him to the same danger ; and he learnt by a divine revelation ‡, what he could not have known by any natural means. All the wise-men in Babylon declared, that all other means were impossible ; and the prince was so persuaded, that the light, which had discovered to Daniel both the dream and the interpretation, was supernatural §, that he had a mind to worship Daniel §, and offer up sacrifice to him. And as this excess of honour displeased the prophet, he contented himself

* Dan. ii. 1, &c.

† Dan. ii. 13.

‡ Dan. ii. 19.

§ Ibid. 11.

Ibid. 28.

§ Ibid. 46, &c.

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himself with loading him with presents, and giving him a general superintendency over all the provinces, and over those who governed them. Daniel, with the permission of the prince, communicated his authority to the three young Hebrews above-mentioned ; who became afterwards so famous for their courage, and for the miracle which God wrought to preserve them in the midst of the flames.

How can we separate these two events ? Whence comes the extraordinary power and authority of Daniel, if the revelation which was the cause of it, be not true ? How come the young Hebrews *, who were captives before with Daniel, to have such new honours heaped upon them, if Daniel, who promoted them, had none himself ? And † why do those who accuse these Hebrews before the prince, mention their charges, and employments, if they were confounded with the other Jews ?

Nebuchadnezzar, being at the height of his power and glory, had another dream which personally regarded himself, and Daniel only could explain. He said to him in precise terms : “ † They shall drive thee from “ men, and thy dwelling place shall be with the beasts “ of the field, and they shall make thee to eat grass as “ oxen, and they shall wet thee with the dew of heaven, “ and seven times shall they pass over thee, till thou “ know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of “ men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will. Thy “ kingdom shall be sure unto thee, after that thou shalt “ have known that the heavens do rule.”

A year after this prediction, Nebuchadnezzar applauding himself for the magnificence and glory he had transferred to Babylon, heard a voice || which came from heaven, and passed condemnation on him in the same terms used by Daniel. This prince was driven from the society of men, whose reason he had lost, and banished among wild beasts, whose inclinations he had imbibed. But at the appointed time, his reason was restored

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to

* Dan. ii. 49.

† Dan. iii. 12.

‡ Dan. iv. 25.

|| Dan. iv. 31, &c.

to him, * and with it religion and humility. He perceived, that all men before God are as nothing, that he alone reigns in heaven, and over the earth, and that all is subject to his will. † Upon this all the nobles of the land went in search of him, and having found him, they replaced him on the throne, and after this, he governed the empire with more glory and authority than he had done in his former state.

Before such a prophecy was verified by the event, it must have appeared improbable in all its parts. Such a sudden and extraordinary humiliation of the prince; the vacancy of the throne for seven years, during which period no one dared to fill it; and the eagerness of the nobles after this term to find out again a distracted king; were in all appearance incredible. And it was for this very reason, that when all was accomplished, none could doubt that God had revealed to Daniel a futurity so impenetrable to all human conjectures.

It is the prince himself ‡ who recites the whole: 'tis he who speaks in Daniel: it is his declaration published in his own language, that this prophet has inserted in his writings. Thus nothing can be of greater authority in history, than this very monument.

But if we consider, that the design of the prince in writing what had happened to him, was to render it public to all the earth; and that he had actually addressed it to the whole world; we shall be further convinced, that Daniel could not have changed it, and that it was impossible he should attribute a manifesto to this prince which he never published; to give it as a declaration, sent by him over all the provinces which notwithstanding no one had ever seen; and to publish in the midst of Babylon, a city full of Jews and Gentiles, an attestation of this nature and importance, tho' its falsehood and forgery were evident to the whole world.

Daniel speaking ¶ to Belshazzar king of Babylon, and grandson of Nebuchadrezzar, in presence of all the court,

* Dan. v. 34. 35.

† Dan. iv. 36.

‡ Dan. iv. 1, &c. ad finem. ¶ Dan. v. 1,—20.

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court, put him in mind of the humiliation of his grandfather, and of his re-establishment, as things of which he had a compleat knowledge. And he reproached him before the queen * his mother, and a thousand persons who were present at a grand entertainment, that † he had not benefited by so astonishing a lesson. Thus the fact is proved beyond denial; and alone is sufficient to prove that Daniel is a prophet, and his writings divine.

During the feast abovementioned, a supernatural hand wrote, in three words, the decree which God had pronounced against the king of Babylon. These words could not be read, or explained, but by Daniel † and it is certain, that the explication of them depended on a divine revelation.

Babylon was taken that very night, || and the king killed in his palace. Thus there was only the interval of a few hours betwixt the prediction of Daniel, and its accomplishment. And we can attribute only to the great reputation acquired by the prediction, the extraordinary honours with which the new § king of Babylon immediately invested this prophet. He made him one of his three prime ministers: ** and his intention was to give him a general †† superintendency over his whole empire. The nobility, who grew jealous of such a favour, suggested to the prince the enacting a law contrary to the religion of Daniel, not knowing how to attack him on any other side. They accused him of having disobeyed, and they forced the prince to expose him to lions, from which he was delivered by a miracle, whose evidence was so manifest, and with which the king was so struck; that he ordered his subjects by a public decree †† to respect and fear the God of Daniel, as the only eternal God, capable of delivering them from all dangers, and even from death itself.

'Tis

* Dan. v. 22.

† Dan. v. 1, &c.

‡ Dan. v. 20, &c.

|| Ibid. ver. 30.

§ The scripture calls him Darius. v. 31.

** Darius set over the kingdom an hundred and twenty princes, and over these three presidents (of whom Daniel was first.) Dan.

1, 2.

†† And the king thought to set him over the whole realm. Ibid. v. 3.

‡‡ Dan. vi. 25.

'Tis impossible to separate any circumstance from this narrative: the elevation of Daniel, who was then advanced in years, under a new * and foreign prince, could have no other reason, but his high reputation upon account of his prophecies, and especially that which he predicted last. The jealousy of the nobility against him is a proof of his elevation. The law proposed by them is an effect of their jealousy: and the decree of the prince, a consequence of the miracle, which God wrought for the protection of his servant. Thus the whole is connected: we must reject or receive all: and how can we reject such public facts, of which there were millions of witnesses, when the history was written; wherein even the solemn act of the prince is produced, the narrative of which constitutes a part of the religion of a whole people?

But though we should permit the most unreasonable incredulity to feign what it pleased, in respect to what has been above mentioned; how is it possible for it to resist the evidence of what I am now going to advance?

When Daniel, as yet very young, † explained Nebuchadnezzar's first dream, he said to him, that the different metals of which the statue ‡ he had seen in his sleep was composed, signified so many different monarchies which would succeed to one another, the first of which were to be destroyed by the latter. One clearly sees that he means the monarchy of the Persians and Medes, and that of the Macedonians and Romans: for he marks them out by very distinct characters, and the order of their succession is a sufficient proof. Where did he see this succession and order? Who discovered to him

the

* Daniel was carried to Babylon as early as the first captivity, after the third year of Jehoiakim, c. i. & vi. Thus he had been there seventy years, when Cyrus and Darius became masters of it, and he must have been then at least eighty years old.

† He was about fifteen.

‡ This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, his legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay. Thou art this head of gold. And there shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another kingdom of brass, and a fourth kingdom shall be as strong as iron. Dan. ii. 32, &c.

the change of empire : who, but he * who is the master of seasons and monarchies, who has regulated all by his decrees, and gives the knowledge of them to whom he pleases, by a supernatural light ?

If it be said that he names not particularly these monarchies, and that we accommodate to the event an ambiguous prophecy ; such an answer will soon be refuted. For the prophet after having characterised in another place the Persian monarchy, and that of the Macedonians, under the figure of two beasts, † explains himself thus clearly : the ram † with two unequal horns, represents the king of the Medes and Persians : the goat, that overthrows and tramples him under foot, is the king of the Greeks : and the great horn which this animal has in his forehead represents the first author of this monarchy.

Here infidelity itself must submit : for without taking advantage of the date of this prophecy, which is the third year of the reign of Belshazzar, king of Babylon, above twelve years || before the taking of this city by Cyrus ; I ask, By what means Daniel foresaw, that the empire of the Persians would be destroyed by that of the Greeks ? how he knew the rapidity of the conquests of Alexander, which he so nobly describes by saying, *he touched not the ground* ? how he foresaw that Alexander would have no successor equal to himself ; and that the first monarch of the Grecians should be also the most powerful ?

I add to these questions : How did this prophet foresee, that § Alexander should have no son to succeed him ? that his empire should be divided into four principal kingdoms ? ** that his successor should be of this nation, but not of his blood ; and that there should be in the wreck of a monarchy formed in so small a time, wherewithal to compose different states ; some of which were to be to the east, others to the west ; some to the south, and others to the north.

We

* Dan. ii. 21, 22.

† Dan. viii. 3.

‡ V. 20, &c.

|| Belshazzar had reigned seventeen years, and Babylon was taken the last day of his life. § Dan. xi. 3. 4.

** Ibid. viii. 22.

We must be blind not only to religion and piety, but to reason itself, not to open our eyes to such a light. But to render it still more strong and convincing: I ask of a fair reasoner, Whether a man who lived under Cyrus could foretell, * that the fourth of his successors would assemble all his forces against Greece? Whether a man who was so distant from the time of the Maccabees, could point out so distinctly all the persecutions of Antiochus † against the Jews; in the manner in which he would abolish their sacrifices ‡ that were daily offered in the temple of Jerusalem; his profaning || this holy place, by placing in it an idol; and the divine vengeance which should pursue him? I put the question to one whom impiety has not entirely perverted, so as to strip him of all shame, Whether it be possible to believe, that any one could in the first year of the reign of the Persians, foretell those wars which the kings of Macedonia, § successors of Alexander, would carry on in the kingdoms of Syria and Egypt; their mutual invasions; their insincerity in treaties; their alliances by marriage, which would only serve to cover their fraud and artifice?

God has given to the prophecies of Daniel such an evidence of their coming from him alone, that we can feign nothing capable of obscuring them; and there is no other resource left for impiety, but to turn this very evidence against those prophets, and to look upon their writings as composed after the facts, and rather on what preceded than on future events.

A R T. II.

We cannot suspect the prophecies of Daniel to have been made after the event.

BUT this suspicion which tainted the minds of the Gentiles, to whom the verity of the christian religion

* Dan. xi. 2.

† Dan. viii. 23, &c. ‡ Dan. viii. 11.

|| Ibid. xi. 31.

§ The prophecies which regard the kings of Macedonia, of Syria and Egypt, are particularly related in the xith of Daniel, from the 5th verse to the end.

on was proved by the prophecies, is fully destroyed by the testimony of the Jews, who have received them from age to age, by an uninterrupted tradition, which ascends as high as the prophets. The prophecies of Daniel in particular were already famous over all the empire of Babylon, when the prophet Ezekiel his contemporary, though of a greater age, and captive as well as he in Chaldea, reproached by divine commission * the king of Tyre for that pride whereby he affected divinity, and asked him with an air of mockery, Whether he then was wiser than Daniel, and whether he knew like him the most secret and hidden things ?

This testimony, which God himself was pleased to give of the more than human wisdom, and of that great foresight into futurity, which he had given to Daniel, surpasses all we can imagine. But were it reduced to the single testimony of a contemporary author, it would suffice to fix the time of Daniel and his prophecies ; and to establish by the date itself their inspiration and divinity.

The same prophet Ezekiel being commissioned to preach divine vengeance to the Israelites, who flattered themselves with a vain hope that the prayers of some virtuous men would suspend the effect, said to them, That if these three men, † Noah, Daniel, and Job, had lived in the same time, and in the same country which God designed to punish, they alone should be saved, but they should not hinder their own families from being involved in the general calamity. The virtue and righteousness of Daniel was therefore at that time comparable to that of Noah and Job. ‡ Consequently he passed for one that had a power with God equal to that of these two great men : the confidence in his prayers and intercession appeared as well grounded as that which had been formerly placed in the prayers of Noah and Job ; one of whom had saved his children, and the other his friends, by his prayers. Now upon what could this opinion of Daniel's favour with God, and this confidence in his prayers,

* Ezek. xxviii. 2, 3.

§ Ezek. xiv. 14, 16.

† Ezek. xiv. 20.

prayers, be grounded, unless upon what is mentioned in his prophecy, that he saved the lives of his three friends, and of all the wise men at Babylon, and that he had obtained by his prayers the revelation of a mysterious dream which the king had forgot, and of the succession of those empires of which it contained the prediction?

Let us add to all this the miracle which God wrought in vouchsafing protection to Daniel in the lions den * and the new authority which such a protection gave to his writings and words, and let us see if there be any possibility of resisting so great a multitude of convincing proofs.

It would not be difficult to shew, that all the other prophets foretold things that served to confirm their authority by the event, which was always conformable to the prediction, and of which the people in that time might be witnesses. But after what I have said of the four principal ones, such a discussion is no longer necessary. First, because the whole is proved as soon as the divine inspiration of certain books is evinced; and their number, greater or less, has no essential union with the truth of scriptures in general. Secondly, because we find in the copious writings of the four prophets, almost all the things that are scattered in the writings of the others; and thus they become vouchers, as it were, and securities, for what the others advance.

C H A P. VII.

We may reduce the ancient scriptures to three heads: to the decalogue; to the public worship; and to the promise of the Messiah. Proofs of the truth of the christian religion, in the first and last commandment of the decalogue,

THE indubitable and almost numberless proofs which I now have, that the scriptures are divine, and that

* Daniel was twice cast to lions. But I only speak of that which is related in chap. vi. because the Jews do not admit into the canon of scripture the history of that which is related in chap. xiv. and which we have only in the Greek.

I ought to regard them as the word of God, add to my first application to read them, a sincere desire of profiting by them, and of following in all things so pure and infallible a light.

A R T. I.

We may reduce to three heads what is contained in the scriptures: to the decalogue; to the public worship; and to the promise of a Messiah.

IT seems to me, after a serious examination, that I can reduce to three heads what is contained in the scriptures which I have received from the Jews, viz. to what regards the decalogue and the law of nature; to what is ordained concerning the externals of religion and public worship; and to the promise and expectation of a Messiah. For I concern myself less in what regards civil government and the particular policy of the Jews, because I think that religion is entirely independent of it, and that the form of a republic may change, without causing any change in the religion. I am going to make many observations in order on these three heads, and shall begin with the decalogue.

I see clearly, that it is the new publication of a more ancient law; and that God says to mankind on mount Sinai, what he had written on their hearts from the beginning; which their passions and errors had partly effaced and very much obscured. By comparing what I hear externally, with the vestiges of that law which is implanted in me, I perceive all the original traces of the first hand; and I admire with what clearness and precision the external law prescribes all that vice and ignorance had rendered uncertain.

A R T. II.

Proof of the truth of religion in the first commandment of the decalogue.

BY the first commandment all the false divinities fall to the ground; all idols are crushed to pieces: and adoration is reserved to one God, invisible, and infinitely distant from matter. By these few words all false religions are confounded; and yet these false religions had over-run the earth. And I may be convinced by this how far reason was useful to man, when he had no other guide.

The manner in which the adoration I owe to God is explained in other places, is a new characteristic, which distinguishes the true religion from all others. * “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.” Nothing was more just, but nothing was less known by other nations; and consequently they were all in an error in relation to the most essential point of religion.

I learn from this precept, that I do not worship God, unless I love him; and that I love him not as my God, if I do not love him with the whole extent of my faculties. Nothing indeed but a full and universal love subjects the whole heart, and humbles it before God as before its sovereign good. All that is kept back remains independent, and all that is independent pays no adoration.

I am thus informed of what it infinitely concerns me to know, viz. that God is not only the object of my admiration; that he is not only a Majesty before whom I ought to stand in respect and fear; but that he is likewise my good, my happiness, my last end: for since he requires of me to love him, and him only, he requires likewise that I be not satisfied but in his enjoyment: and it is evident that he does not exact of me a love that gives me nothing but disquiet, and can never arrive at its term.

* Deut. vi. 5. and xi. 13.

I learn from this, that religion is a communication betwixt God and me; that I am loved first, because he commands me to love him; that he is attentive to all my desires, because he demands them all; and that all my actions are present to him, because he is willing to be the principal end of them all. Such truths comfort and ravish me: but where should I have discovered them, had they not been revealed to me? and who could have calmed my doubts, augmented by those of other men, had not God himself manifested to me his will and my duties?

All the precepts which follow the first, need only publication to shew their reasonableness, and the understanding immediately submits to the light which accompanies them. The supreme truth ought never to be called on as a witness to falsehood, nor invoked in proof of frivolous things. It is just that the cares of this life should not take up all the days of the week, and that one of them should be consecrated to divine worship. The rule of not doing to others what we would not have done to ourselves, is the foundation of all society; and all the commandments which regard our neighbour, are but the application of it.

A R T. III.

Proof of the truth of religion in the last commandment of the decalogue.

BUT the last, which would suffice alone if well observed, discovers to me the source of all the injustices of mankind, by forbidding me * all desires of temporal goods which do not belong to me, of what kind soever they be.

I perceive that the source of these desires in me is very unjust; that it is not enough to abstain from a bad action, if in my heart I approve the intention and will; that it is not lawful for me to desire what I am not permitted to do; and that in the eyes of God I am such as is my heart.

* Exod. xx, 17.

But who could have informed me of this secret corruption * within me, if the law of God had not said to me in clear and menacing words, "Thou shalt desire no thing of what is not thine." What other law ever went so far as this? What other religion ever made a crime of it? There is none but the true religion that acquaints me who I am, what are my calamities, and from what cause they arise.

By the prohibition of my desiring other people's property, it remains me not to place my affection in what really belongs to me. It points out to me other goods, which partnership no ways diminishes: it teaches me to content myself here below with what is necessary, and even to go patiently without it, if it be denied me; and it procures me at the same time peace and innocence, by ordering me to resist a concupiscence, which is an enemy of both.

I embrace therefore with my whole heart a law so pure, and so conformable to my necessities; and I look upon all that is in scripture in regard of it, such as promises, menaces, exhortations, examples, as if from the beginning they had been written for me, and I alone was obliged to benefit thereby.

C H A P.

* Rom. vii, 7.

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C H A P. VIII.

The external worship prescribed by Moses, was not designed to be perpetual. It was not the principal design of God, even in regard of the Jews. It was to cease upon the preaching of true justification. This time is that of the Messiah. New proofs that the scriptures are divine.

A R T. I.

Proofs, that the external worship prescribed by Moses has no necessary connection with true religion, and was not designed to be perpetual.

IN regard of the public and external part of religion, such as Moses prescribes to the Jews, I have a very different idea of it from what I have of the natural law renewed in the decalogue: and I have room to believe that true piety depends not thereon, and that it was not designed to be perpetual.

The ceremonial part of the Jewish religion is reducible to five or six principal heads: to the tabernacle, to which the temple has succeeded; to the priesthood; to the sacrifices of different kinds; to feasts and solemnities; to circumcision and other external laws; and to several sorts of purifications which regard only the body. All these things are connected with each other. We cannot degrade one, without degrading all. It would be attacking the priesthood to attack the sacrifices: it would be slighting the public worship to ridicule the solemn feasts.

But let us hear how God himself speaks in Isaiah: *
 " To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices
 " unto me? I am full. I delight not in the blood of
 " bullocks. When ye come to appear before me, who
 " hath required this at your hands? Bring no more
 " vain oblations, incense is an abomination unto me,
 " the

“ the new moons and Sabbaths, the calling of assemblies
 “ I cannot away with: my soul hateth; I am weary to
 “ bear them.” Is it possible that God should thus speak
 of a worship which was to be perpetual, and without
 which none could please him? It seems to me, that the
 thing admits of no manner of doubt; and what the same
 prophet adds in another place is still stronger*: “ Thus
 “ saith the Lord, The heaven is my throne, and the
 “ earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye
 “ build unto me? and where is the place of my rest?
 “ For all those things hath my hands made, and all
 “ those things have been, saith the Lord: but to this
 “ man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a
 “ contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word. He that
 “ killeth an ox, is as if he slew a man: he that burn-
 “ eth incense, as if he blessed an idol.”

Nothing can be added to the strength of these expressions. The temple is accounted as nothing: the sacrifices are as odious as homicide: the oblation of incense is looked upon with the same indignation as idolatrous worship.

But are not these expressions, some will say, too strong? Did not Isaiah himself offer sacrifice? And have not, since the prophecy, the most religious and enlightened amongst the Jews continued to offer them? There is therefore an exaggeration in his words; and since they cannot be literally understood, we must not infer from thence any consequence against the public worship commanded by law.

We have but an imperfect knowledge of the exact truth of the word of God, when we charge him with hyperboles for which great allowances must be made, and from whence no conclusion can be drawn. It would thus be no longer the rule of our faith; and we should be obliged to reform it, by reducing those hyperbolical and forced expressions, which are capable of imposing on credulous minds; by reducing them, I say, to a just and moderate sense.

God's discourse in Isaiah has two objects, and instructs us in two truths. It teaches us, that the external

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* Isai. lxi. 1, 2, 3.

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worship, tho' regulated by his orders, is not the essential part; and that if it be separate from internal piety, it is useless, and even odious to heaven. This is the first object, and the first truth. But the words of God go further: and they teach us, that this imperfect worship will one day be intirely abolished; that it is not to subsist but for a time, and is only provisional; and that, when another worship more worthy of God shall have suppressed it, it will be the same thing to continue the abolished sacrifices, as if they should stain themselves with human victims; and that they will be as culpable, by continuing obstinate in offering to God an incense which he requires no longer, as if they offered it to idols. This is the second object, and the second truth, which exactly fill the whole extent of the prophet's words.

There remains notwithstanding some slight suspicion in the mind, that it is not so much the worship itself which Isaiah had in view, as the crimes of the Jewish nation, which dishonoured and rendered it odious, tho' it was holy in itself, and was designed to be perpetual.

I acknowledge, that the prophet reproaches the people with their crimes; but his words fall upon the worship itself; and they are a clear prophecy that it will one day be abolished, and that it will then become criminal.

David looked upon it as insufficient, and as designed one day to make room for another: * "For thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it: thou desirest not in burnt-offering. Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt-offering and whole burnt offering." There is no question here about the sins of the people; 'tis of the sacrifices themselves that God says he will have none, and from the hands of David his prophet that he refuses them. But this refusal is not general. The sacrifices of the law are rejected, but that which is to succeed will be accepted. A new victim is promised, consequently the abolition of the old ones is foretold.

A R T.

* Psal. li. 16, 19.

A R T. II.

The external worship was not the principal design of God, even in regard of the Jews.

THE prophet Jeremiah is not content with saying to the Jews by the authority of God: * "To what purpose cometh there to me incense from Shebah and the sweet cane from a far country? Your burnt offerings are not acceptable, nor your sacrifices sweet unto me:" he adds these important words; † "Thus saith the Lord of hosts the God of Israel, I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt-offerings or sacrifices. But this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people."

So far is it therefore from being true, that the external worship ‡ established by the law of Moses is always to subsist, that it was not the primary intention of God; and so far is it from being the only means of pleasing him, that all the divine promises are independent of it, and have preceded it.

Moses himself, tho' the minister of the law, has taken care to give us notice of it; and we ought to be particularly attentive to the reflection with which he ends the decalogue: || "These words the Lord spake unto all your assembly in the mount out of the midst of the fire, and he added no more". Such a reflection comprehends and explains all the decalogue, therefore alone sufficed: what is added to it is not essential to religion. It was established with other views; and when the use is past, it will only serve as a testimony and figure, and will be no longer a matter of obligation.

But why did God load the Jewish with so many precepts, if those of the decalogue sufficed? God himself

* Jer. vi. 26.

† Ibid. vii. 21. &c.

‡ See Psalm xlix. from 7 to 16.

|| Deut. v. 22.

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* Exek. 1

† Ibid. 26

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self has condescended to tell us the reason. * " Thus
 " faith the Lord God, in the day when I chose Israel,
 " I caused them to go forth out of the land of Egypt,
 " and brought them into the wilderness. And I gave
 " them my statutes, and shewed them my judgments,
 " which if a man do, he shall live in them. But the
 " house of Israel rebelled against me in the wilderness;
 " they walked not in my statutes. Wherefore † I gave
 " them also statutes that were not good, and judgments
 " whereby they should not live".

It is evident that the vivifying precepts are those of
 the decalogue; for we cannot observe the first com-
 mandment, without loving God with all our hearts;
 nor the last, without resisting all the temptations of con-
 cupiscence, and consequently without being just. And
 it is visible likewise, that the precepts that give neither
 goodness nor life, are all such observances of the law
 as reform not the heart, because they are only external,
 and may subsist with guilt and injustice. This appears
 more plain in the following versicle, which seems to re-
 ject all sacrifices, either free-offerings, or atonements for
 sins, and excepts not even the oblation of the first-born:
 " And I polluted them in their own gifts, in that they
 " caused to pass through the fire all that openeth the
 womb" ‡.

True it is, that the original terms of this versicle con-
 demns nothing but the offering of their first-born to false
 divinities, by making them pass through the fire; for
 tho' the prophet speaks neither of fire, nor of Moloch,
 nor of Baal, he notwithstanding makes use of a term ||
 that can signify nothing but this impious ceremony.

True it is also, that the terms which St. Jerom trans-
 lates, *Propter delicta vestra, for your crimes*, may be
 referred to another root, § and signify, *Ut in solitudi-*
nem, or, desolationem adducerem eos; which supposes,
 that God had been so provoked by these abominable
 sacrifices, that he punished the whole nation by a gene-
 ral

* Exek. xx. 5, 10. 13, 25.

† Ibid. 26. ‡ Ibid. xx. 26.

|| Haabir.

§ Not to *Ascham* deliquit; but to *Schaman* desolavit.

ral solitude and desolation. We ought not then to attribute these sacrifices to any other will of God, than to that which sometimes punishes crimes by the permission of greater ones: and to such a will as that mentioned by St. Paul, * where he says, that God punished the ingratitude and pride of philosophers, by giving them up to the desires of their hearts, and to the most shameful passions. Here arises some obscurity, which renders the sense of the prophet doubtful; and if I had only this one authority, I could not conclude in a decisive manner, that these observances are so far from being necessary means of pleasing God, that we learn from himself, that their first establishment was the effect of his anger; that they are the chastisement of the hard-heartedness and indocility of the Jews; that they are a proof of their having been unworthy of an internal and spiritual law, which they despised; and that consequently they were to cease, as soon as the time of true justice was come.

A R T. III.

The external worship was to cease upon the preaching of true justification.

BUT this is what is taught us in clear terms by another prophet. † “I hate, I despise your feast-days. Tho’ ye offer me your burnt-offerings, and your meat-offerings, I will not accept them: take thou away from me the noise of thy songs, for I will not hear the melody of thy viols; but let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream”.

It is evident that God joins together these two things; the manifestation of true justice, which shall be universal, and not confined to one nation; and the abolition of all that was most solemn and venerable in the worship prescribed by the law. It is therefore evident like-

* Rom. i. 24, 26.

† Amos. v. 21, 22, 23, 24.

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ways, that the duration of this worship and the manifestation of true justice are opposites: and the more we love true righteousness, the more we must desire the abrogation of the Jewish law.

'Tis those very scriptures which the Jews have put into my hands, that instruct me in these truths: and it is because that I believe them divine, that I am not inclined to subject myself to observances, whose insufficiency and weakness they discover to me, and which are certainly now abolished, if it be certain, that true justification has been preached to the whole world.

I become still more timorous on this head, when I consider with attention what a certain prophet says to me of a new covenant, different from that which was the foundation of the law, and which is to succeed and abolish it. * "Behold the day is come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand, to bring them out of the land of Egypt (which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord:) but this shall be the covenant I will make with the house of Israel: after those days, saith the the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and will be their God and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest of them: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more".

Upon this I make several reflections. First, The old covenant must necessarily be defective, † since God promised a new one. Secondly, Since the second is called the new, it is a proof that the other is abrogated as

* Jer. xxxi. 31, &c.

† For if the first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. Hebr. viii. 7.

grown old : and all that is old * is near to its end. I have then reason to believe it subsists no longer : for since that time wherein the prophet spake, down to mine, there are elapsed about two thousand three hundred years. Thirdly, The first covenant has nothing that attracts me. It subsists not, in case it still has a being; but by its maledictions; for in respect to man it is broken; and its promises are cancelled by his infidelity. On the contrary, I have a great interest in the new covenant, † because God promises me there, what he exacted from man in the old. He takes upon himself the condition which is to ratify it. He not only says to me: “ If you obey me, I will recompense your obedience”; but he tells me, “ that he himself will render me obedient”.

He gives me no longer an external law, but he writes it in my heart. It is not ‡ upon stone that he engraves it: but he imprints it upon my will. This covenant consists in the promise of my fidelity, and the gift of my justification: and I have no inclination to put myself under the antient yoke, if the time of my liberty is come.

For the two covenants are incompatible. One must give place || to the other. The new abolishes the old, and we cannot unite them in the same time.

Of this I am still more convinced by this other prophecy, which assures me, that the ark of the covenant, so famous and respected in the old law, shall be intirely forgot in the new, and that none will remember it any more. § “ And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you according to knowledge and understanding. They shall say no more, the ark of the covenant of the Lord: neither shall it come to mind, neither shall they remember it, neither

* A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old, is ready to vanish away. Hebr. v. 13.

† (Which my covenant they brake, altho’ I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord)

‡ Jer. xxxi. 33.

§ Ibid. v. 31, 32. § Jer. iii. 15, 16.

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“neither shall they visit it, neither shall that be done any more”.

All the sanctity of the law depends on that of the tabernacle and temple; and the tabernacle is holy only in relation to the ark, which is placed in the most retired and inaccessible place, where * the high priest alone has permission to enter, and but once a-year. The ark is called the throne of God: to appear before it, is, in the terms of the law, to appear before God.

What becomes then of the tabernacle or temple, if the ark of the covenant be no longer sought after? What becomes of the public worship, of which it was the center, if it be itself forgot, and this oblivion be the effect of religion? for it is not through an irreligious contempt that it is neglected: it is by a divine light: † it is in consequence of a sublime knowledge. The ark therefore must be the figure of something more noble, of which the new covenant is to contain the truth, and must disappear like a shadow, when the time of the substance and reality is come.

A R T. IV.

Proofs that the external worship ought to cease at the coming of the Messiah.

BUT by what signs may I know this? The promise of a new alliance is clear in the scriptures: the incompatibility of two alliances is not less evident; but it concerns me to know at what time the new one will begin.

The prophets clearly mark it out for me; and they all fix it at the coming of the Messiah. I shall confine myself to two decisive prophecies, of which this is the first: † “Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire, “mine ears hast thou opened (according to St. Paul, *but a body hast thou prepared me*): burnt-offering

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* The ark was placed in that part of the tabernacle called the holy of holies.

† Jer. v. 16. † Psalm xl. 6, 7, 8.

“ and sin offering hast thou not required. Then said I,
 “ Lo, I come : in the volume of the book it is writ-
 “ ten of me : I delight to do thy will, O my God !
 “ yea, thy law is written in my heart”.

None can doubt, but that it is the Messiah who speaks here. David had not the presumption to think, that he could supply the place of all the sacrifices commanded by the law. He did not believe himself a victim innocent of his own nature, and such a one as was capable of reconciling all mankind to God. He was neither foretold nor promised from the beginning of the scriptures ; and we must strangely wrest his words, to bring them to a sense applicable to him.

It is therefore at the coming of the Messiah that all sacrifices were to cease that had been ordained by the law of Moses. They were never worthy of God. They were never capable of pleasing him, and they were not tolerated but as figures and types of a single sacrifice, promised from the beginning, which, as soon as it is present, is to abolish them all. The opposition betwixt these two things is evident : “ Thou hast not
 “ required sacrifice: then I said, Lo, I come” : “ burnt-
 “ offerings please thee not ; I offer my own person”. He abolishes one, and * substitutes the other.

The second prophecy is not less clear : it is in the cxth psalm, which every one explains of the Messiah, and it is impossible to understand it of another object : †
 “ The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, thou art
 “ a priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec.

Here is a new priesthood, very different from that of Aaron ; and by consequence that of Aaron is abolished. And in effect, of what use ‡ would it be under an eternal priest, who can have no successor ? But if the priesthood of Aaron be abolished, all the law of Moses is abolished also ; for it is necessarily connected with the ministry of the priests of the tribe of Levi. And it is evident in other respects, that if the priesthood, which is always the capital point of a covenant, and the foundation of public worship, prove insufficient, all that is built on this foundation must be still more imperfect.

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* Hebr. x. 6. † Psalm cx. 4. ‡ Hebr. vii. 11, 22.

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The priesthood of Melchisedec was a long time before that of Aaron. The first therefore cannot be restored, without declaring the other useless. Melchisedec is neither preceded nor followed by any one: he is the image of an eternal priest, * who neither begins nor dies. The Messiah, of whom he is the image, is in reality the only priest worthy of God, whom none has preceded, and none are to follow.

He has two qualities: † he is both victim and priest. As victim, he abolishes all the sacrifices of the law; as priest, he abolishes the priesthood. In offering himself, he declares, that what had been offered before him was not pleasing to God. By ‡ exercising an eternal priesthood, he abolishes the legal one, which was continued by mortal men, and could offer no sacrifices but such as death destroyed.

I am therefore assured, that all the external ministry of the law must have an end at the coming of the Messiah; and I have nothing to do but examine into the time when he is to come.

A R T. V.

New proof, that the scriptures are divine.

BUT before we enter upon this discussion, I ought to observe a new mark of the truth and divinity of the scriptures, in the judgment they pass on all the legal ordinances; that they are insufficient, that God had another principal design in appointing them, and that they are to be abrogated hereafter. For in their institution all these truths are suppressed; and it seems as if salvation was necessarily joined to these observances, and that the practice of them was commanded for ever. It could therefore be only a supernatural light, which revealed to the prophet so hidden and important a secret, and acquainted men who were more attentive than others in keeping the minutest precepts of the law, that

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these

* Hebr. 24. † Psalm xl. ‡ Ibid. cxix.

these precepts of themselves could neither please God, nor justify man.

CH A P. IX.

The most ancient promise is that of a Messiah: renewed to Abraham: fixed to the tribe of Judah, and afterwards to the house of David. The last prophet ends the scriptures with renewing it. The revelation of the sin of Adam, and of the condemnation of his posterity is a proof of religion, and that the scriptures are divine. The revelation of the promise of the Messiah is a new proof.

A R T. I.

The most ancient promise is that of a Messiah, renewed to Abraham, fixed to the tribe of Judah, and afterwards to the house of David. The last prophet ends the scriptures with renewing it.

I CANNOT examine into the time of the coming of the Messiah without examining the promise. It is as ancient as the world, and the first which the scriptures mention: * “And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.”

This promise has been renewed in other terms to Abraham: † “And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.”

Abraham understood it thus; and did not believe that it should be either by him or by Isaac, that all nations were to be blessed; since the same promise was made to Isaac ‡ his son, and to Jacob || his grandson: for

* Gen. iii. 15.

† Gen. xxii. 18.

‡ To Isaac in the same terms, Gen. xxvi. 4.

|| To Jacob, In thee and thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. Ibid. xxviii. 14.

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* Gen. x
† 2 Sam.

for it would not have been necessary to renew it to Isaac, if he was the object; and it would have been useless to renew it to Jacob, had it been accomplished in Isaac.

On the other hand it was evident, that if these great men were only the depositaries, and not the end of the promise, there was no probability that their natural posterity, inferior in every respect to their merit, should be the cause of the benediction of all nations; and it was manifest, that this was reserved for the Son promised from the beginning of the world, who was to crush the serpents head; the first prediction of whom, which was clear, served to interpret the rest.

The promise of the Messiah, instead of passing from Jacob to Joseph, who was the most virtuous of the family, was fixed to Judah by a gratuitous privilege. His father as he gave him his blessing, spoke thus: * "Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise; thy father's children shall bow down before thee. The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be."

This prophecy is more determinate and exact than the others. For it speaks clearly of him who is to be sent, and is expected by all nations, and it reserves for one alone what seemed to be said in a general manner of all the posterity of Abraham: but the first prophecies had been understood in the same sense.

In the tribe of Judah God † chuses the family of Jesse; and amongst his children, the last of all, who was David, to be the progenitor of the Messiah. He used the same providential disposition in regard of the children of David, and he preferred Solomon to all the others, tho' the youngest: to shew throughout that the promise of the Messiah was gratuitous, and depended only on the divine goodness.

The prediction ‡ of the eternal reign of the Messiah is mixed with some particularities which agree with that of Solomon. But it is easy to separate them; and none of the Jews have been deceived in this respect.

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* Gen. xlviii. 8, 10.

† 1 Chron. xxviii. 13, 13.

‡ 2 Sam. vii. 14, 16. 1 Chron. xvii. 13, 14.

They have all comprehended, that neither David nor Solomon was the true object of the promise, and that they were only as an essay or figure of it. They have all understood by it the Christ and King who was to descend from David, even at the time when his posterity were no longer on the throne; and many of the prophets call him David, * to shew in a more lively manner that the first David was but the shadow, and the veil by which the true one was concealed.

After the promise of the Messiah came to be annexed to the house of David, all the prophets spoke more clearly and oftener of him; and I should be obliged to make long extracts to relate all they have said. I shall content myself with citing those who were last in time, as the most recent and surest witnesses that he was not come, but that he was still expected.

† “ And the desire of all nations shall come, and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts. The glory of this latter house shall be greater than the former, and in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts.”

‡ “ For behold, I will bring forth my servant the rising || Sun. § Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout O daughter of Jerusalem: behold thy king cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation.”
“ Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. But unto you that fear my name, shall the Sun of righteousness ** arise, with healing in his †† wings.”

’Tis with this promise that the scriptures received by the Jews are closed, as with it they begin. It leaves them in expectation of a deliverer, of a King who will

* Jer. xxx. 9. Ezck. xxxiv. 23. Ezck. xxxvii. 24. ^{give} Hof. iii. 5.

† Haggai ii. 7, 9.

‡ Zech. iii. 8. & vi. 12.

|| In the English translation *Branch*. The septuagint version, and St. Luke i. 78, 79. authorise the translation I have made of the Hebrew term used in the prophet Zechariah.

§ Zech. ix. 9. ** Mal. iv. 2. †† For rays.

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give them peace; of a Sun of justice, who will dissipate their darkness, and restore their health.

Since this promise, they have received no other. The last prophet, in ceasing to speak, has silenced the law: and the silence it has kept for so long a time, is a great presumption that all it expected is accomplished.

But before we enter into the discussion of this important point, I ought to avail myself of two great truths which the promise of the Messiah discovers to me.

The first is, that all men are sinners from their birth; that they have lost what was taken from the first man; that they were banished from the terrestrial paradise with him; condemned, as he, to death; and that God makes no difference betwixt Adam and his posterity.

The second is, that God designs to re-establish man in the rights which he has forfeited; but that he will not grant him this favour but by the intercession of a Mediator, who is to put an end to the * malediction with which the earth was struck; and who is to be the source of a benediction, which shall comprehend † all nations.

A R T. II.

The revelation of the sin of Adam, and of the condemnation of his posterity, is a proof of the truth of religion, and that the scriptures are divine.

I Shall stop at the first of these truths: and here I put the question to myself, whether I could have discovered it by the mere force of natural reason? whether it was known to any other people beside the Jews? whether any other religion but theirs have supposed it as the foundation of all? whether it was possible to speak more clearly and more distinctly of it than Moses has done? and whether he could have done this, without having learnt it by a tradition, that ascended as high as the time of Adam's innocence, and by consequence to the

* Cursed is the ground for thy sake, Gen. iii. 17.

§ And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, Gen. xxii, 18.

the first origin of all, God himself; or without having been informed of it by a divine revelation?

And yet, what was all human knowledge, whilst they were ignorant of this capital truth, upon which all those verities, which relate to religion, must necessarily depend?

How little was known with relation to man and his true condition? Who is it that could discern what immediately came from the Creator, or was the effect of punishment? what man had received, or what he had lost? what was his nature, or his disorder? what he ought to follow, or what it was his duty to check?

What could they comprehend in that disposition of providence, with which God during so many ages had treated all mankind, permitting them to worship every thing except himself; and not manifesting himself but to a small nation, the only depositaries of his scriptures, promises, and worship?

What judgment could they form of the defects that are common to almost all men, and are born with them? and how could they avoid looking upon God as the author of them?

What method had they of reconciling the grand and noble perfections of man, with his weakness and meanness? how could they reconcile the astonishing contrarieties with which man abounds? how could they account for an origin of so great an elevation, as lays claim to every thing, even to eternal duration, and infinite happiness; and at the same time for another of such grovelling meanness, as renounces all these pretensions for a present object of pleasure, tho' never so contemptible?

But all clears up as soon as I know, that the state wherein I see man, is not that in which he was at first placed by God. No longer am I surpris'd to see in misery, a rebellious and degraded subject. I find no longer any contradiction in the work of God: I only see one in the remainder of this great work, and the changes which man has made. I know to whom I ought to refer man's elevation and lowness. The causes are different: and whilst I admire the precious remains of a former grandeur, which still retains the marks of the hand of God, I deplore the hideous ruins which the imprudence

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Before I was informed of the changes which has happened in my first condition, I was to myself an inexplicable enigma. The more I applied my thoughts to know myself, the more difficulties arose in my mind. It seemed to me, that I was a banished person, and I could not account for it. I was punished, and I knew not the reason. I desired to establish order and peace in my senses, and comprehended not why I had merited to disobey myself. I could not imagine, how being created by God, I had such weak sentiments towards him, whereas I had such lively ones for things that were neither my real good, nor my end. I could give no reason to myself of the propensity I feel, of confounding myself with my body, and of taking it constantly for myself: whereas I find a great difficulty to consider myself as a being independent of matter, though this properly be my nature. But all perplexities cease, as soon as I know I am a sinner, and conceived in sin. My curiosity then is changed into groans: I enquire no further, but grieve.

True it is, that the manner in which the sin of Adam has descended down to me, is covered with obscurities. But from this single point surrounded with darkness, the light which clears up all, proceeds. If, because I find a difficulty to comprehend this one point, I refuse to believe, I understand nothing in all things else: God, man, the universe, enter immediately into a dark abyss, where I can discover nothing. But if I suppose this one point, without presumptuously endeavouring to fathom it, all the rest becomes clear: God, man, the universe, place themselves, in regard to me, in a point of light where-in I discern all that was concealed from me before.

I have therefore no difficulty to believe one thing, the faith of which is recompensed by the comprehending of so many others: and I would rather submit my reason to one article which it does not understand, but is revealed; than shock it upon an infinity of others, which it comprehends as little, and of which divine revelation denies it not the free examination, and does not clear up the difficulties.

I perceive even in this a character of truth and divinity in the scriptures, which greatly strengthens me. For the less probable the sin of the first man is; the less natural it seems, that it should comprehend his posterity: the less the mind of man discovers by what justice children are culpable before the exercise of liberty; the more I am convinced, that such truths could not have had any other foundation than divine revelation; and that their finding belief amongst men, was entirely owing to the evidence of the proofs of divine revelation.

A R T. III.

The revelation of the promise of a Messiah is a new proof of the truth of religion and the scriptures.

THE promise of a deliverer was still more distant from human conjecture, than the sin of the first man, and the condemnation of all his posterity. For we might, by seeing man miserable, conjecture that he was born in injustice; and by considering what he has left of good and bad, conclude that he has fallen from his primitive state. But who would ever have thought of a Redeemer, had he not been promised? and who could have founded a religion on this promise, had not God explained himself upon this point from the beginning, and had not he condescended to renew from time to time, a free gratuitous promise, which men could never have divined, a promise with which their natural corruption was little moved, and which the long delay would have made them forget, or even despise as false, had it had only a human foundation.

Tho' I had no other proof of the divinity of the scriptures than this, it would suffice alone to make me look upon them as the basis of true religion. For they teach me, what I could not have known but by them, and must have looked for in vain elsewhere.

They inform me of the only truth that is of real use to me: all others would conduct me to nothing solid, were I ignorant of this. They teach me, what God is in regard to me, and what I am in relation to him; by what means

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means I may return to him ; upon what hope the worship, which I owe to him, is grounded ; and how this worship may be agreeable to him . and without these salutary truths, I should all my life have wandered, and gone out of my way, wearying myself in paths that would lead me to no certain end.

I should have presented myself to God without knowing that I displeased him ; or I should have thought, that I might have reconciled myself to him by my services. I should have been ignorant that the communication betwixt him and me was cut off ; that I was banished from his sight ; and that I should be always the object of his anger, if I was not recalled by his mercy, which ought to be the first principle of my repentance and return, and which is granted me only thro' the merits of a Mediator.

I should thus have added pride to my unworthiness by approaching to his throne, without having appeased him. I should have provoked him, by a vain confidence in myself ; and I should only have widened the breach that separated me from him, making useless efforts to approach him, without him who was to be my peace-maker, and who was to change into benediction the anathema which had separated me from him for ever.

In vain should I have profoundly reflected upon the divine essence, upon the greatness and immensity of the infinite Being, and upon the traces which all creatures bear of his power and wisdom. I should have lost myself in my own thoughts, which would have been reasonable indeed, but useless ; and while I thought myself very wise, I should have been equally imprudent and unhappy, because I should have been a stranger to the only way leading to happiness.

Nothing therefore ought to engage me more, than the promise of a deliverer, because God himself, without this promise, would be just and faithful only to punish me : and therefore I never can sufficiently reverence the scriptures, which give me a hope and comfort that ought to constitute all the happiness of my life ; and which are not content with discovering to me whither I ought to tend, but likewise shew me the way.

C H A P. X.

It is certain by evident proofs, that the Messiah is come, and that Jesus Christ is the Messiah. First proof drawn from the accomplishment of the prophecy of Jacob.

ALL that I have hitherto seen in the scriptures, which I have received from the Jews, and which they, as well as I, esteem as divine, has produced in me a firm persuasion, that the Messiah, whom they still look for, is already come; and that they have had the misfortune not to know him. But I shall not content myself with an opinion founded on conjectures only; and in a question so important as this, I ought not to determine but upon evident proofs.

What is said in general of the Messiah, and his reign, is not sufficiently decisive; one may interpret it differently, and my design is to avoid all reasonings, that may leave behind them any obscurity. I shall therefore confine myself only to such as carry along with them a perspicuity, of which every one may be judge. Those which precisely determine the time of the Messiah's coming are of this kind, and I shall begin with them.

The first is the famous prophecy of Jacob, which we have quoted in the foregoing chapter, and which our business is now to examine. “* Judah, thou art he
“whom thy brethren shall praise; thy father's children
“shall bow down before thee. The † scepter shall not
“depart from Judah, nor a ‡ lawgiver from between
“his feet, untill || Shiloh come, and unto him shall the
“gathering of the people be.” All the ancient Jews have explained this prophecy as referring to the Messiah,

as

* Gen. xlix. 8, 10

† Scepter, authority, or superiority over the other tribes.

‡ Lawgiver, a Magistrate, Captain, the Hebrew term Mechek, has all these significations.

|| Which shall come, Shiloh, The last letter is a smooth breathing, instead of a rough one, their resemblance occasions their change: 'tis the same word as Siloam in St. John ix. 7. which is interpreted, sent.

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as their paraphrases and ancient monuments testify, and many of the modern Jews are of the same opinion. But tho' they should all conspire to apply this prophecy to another, with what success could they do it?

Is it not evident, that Jacob designs to speak of him, who had been promised to himself as well as to Isaac and Abraham, and who was to be the blessing of all nations? He marks him out by the name of sent, as Moses did when he said to God, “ * O my Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send.” And it is visible, that he looks upon his coming as the public good, not only of his own family, but of all nations : which cannot agree but with the Messiah.

To enter into the true sense of this prophecy, we must make some observations.

Judah was but the fourth son of Jacob † ; and yet he is preferred to his elder brothers to be the inheriter of the promises, and to take the first place amongst them.

This first rank, after the benediction of Jacob, was always allowed him His tribe is always mentioned first, when preference or honour is in question. It is the first in offering its ‡ gifts to the Lord. It has its place allotted on the east side || of the camp, opposite to the entrance of the tabernacle : and after the death of Joshua **, God being consulted by all the people upon the choice of a new head he answered, it should be Judah.

The royal authority was afterwards granted to this tribe, in the person of David and his descendants ; but David acknowledges, that superiority of the tribe of Judah over the others, is more ancient than the royalty : “ † † for he hath chosen Judah to be ruler ;” this relates to the time immediately following Jacob's benediction ; “ And of the house of Judah, the house of my father.” And it is for this reason that David calls Judah his king ; † † at

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* Exodus iv. 13.

† Gen. xxix. 35.

‡ And he that offered his offering the first day, was Nahshon, of the tribe of Judah.” Numb. vii. 12.

|| Numb. ii. 2.

** Judges i. 1, 2.

† † 1 Chron. xxviii. 4.

‡ ‡ Judah is my lawgiver, Psalm lx 7. This Psalm is certainly David's, as well as the cviiith, where the same expression is

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the very time that he himself was established king over all Israel; because the superiority of Judah was independent of the person of David, had begun before him, and was to continue, when his family was to be no more upon the throne.

When the ten tribes, who had separated themselves from that of Judah, were dispersed over several provinces by the kings of Assyria, and no longer formed a visible body; that of Judah maintained itself even in captivity: for one part continued in Judea, and the other which was united in Babylon, and the neighbouring places, had some eminent men, such as Daniel, and the three celebrated friends, the prophet Ezekiel, and others, upon whose account it was greatly respected. It * had one of those kings with it, whom the successor of Nebuchadnezzar ordered to eat at his table, and had raised above all the other dispossessed or tributary princes. And when Cyrus restored the Jews to their liberty, this same tribe returned in a body, under the conduct of Zorobabel, to its ancient inheritance, whither God had not permitted that the kings of Babylon should send any foreign colonies, as the kings of Assyria had sent unto the country of the ten banished tribes.

Then the tribe of Judah became more powerful, more famous and illustrious, than ever, because it was almost the only one that served as the basis and foundation of the republic. It was it that furnished magistrates and senators. It was it that communicated its name to all the other tribes, that were no longer known but by the name of Jews; and it preserved this pre-eminence, till in the time of Titus it lost Jerusalem, the temple, all its villages, its liberty, the privilege of forming a consistent body, and was at last reduced to the same condition with the other tribes, being like them dispersed and

is repeated. This expression is the same as Jacob's in the original Hebrew, *Mechokek*; and it is evident, that David alludes to the two places above cited.

* Evil merodach did lift up the head of Jehoiachin (the same as Jechonias) king of Judah out of prison. And set his throne above the throne of the kings that were with him in Babylon, and he did eat bread continually before him all the days of his life. 2 Kings xxvii. 27, &c.

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* Gen. x
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and dismembered, stripped of all authority and jurisdiction, and giving no longer either head or magistrate to the other parts of the people nor to itself.

This is what Jacob had foretold, and may be reduced to these two essential points. The first, that as long as the tribe of Judah shall subsist, it shall have the pre-eminence and authority over the other tribes.

The second, that it shall thus subsist, and form a republic governed by its own laws, and directed by its own magistrates, till the Messiah is come: and the other tribes are not to have the same privilege, because they must be dispersed before this great event, and they are to have no part in it, but inasmuch as they are incorporated with that of Judah.

This sense, which is plain and natural, is clearly contained in the terms of the prophecy. For Jacob does not say, that a day will come, when the sceptre shall be given to the tribe of Judah, and it shall keep it till the coming of the Messiah: but he says, that the sceptre * shall not depart from Judah, till he who is to be sent shall come. He immediately gives him authority † over all his brethren. He puts forthwith the sceptre in his hands; that is to say, command and pre-eminence. And he assures him, that this pre-eminence shall be continued to him until the coming of the Messiah; and that it shall be an evident proof that he is come, when the tribe of Judah shall no longer rule, nor have any longer a succession of magistrates drawn from its own bosom.

This pure and resplendent light is darkened by deferring the authority of Judah till the time of David; and by taking the sceptre from it at the captivity of Zedekiah, that is to say, near six hundred years before the coming of Christ. And this inconveniency, which strips the prophecy of all its force, is owing to some people's giving too limited a signification to the term of sceptre, which they are forced afterwards to abandon; for they cannot explain how the tribe of Judah preserved the

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sceptre

* Gen. xlix. 10. † Ibid. xlix. 8.

This benediction took effect the moment it was given, like that which Jacob received. Gen. xxvii. 29.

sceptre after the captivity of Babylon, if by this name we are to understand royalty.

On the contrary, all obscurity and confusion is removed, if by this figurative name of sceptre, or staff of command, we understand what the ancients meant, that is, a pre-eminence attended with authority, which has been sometimes greater, and more remarkable in the tribe of Judah, and sometimes less absolute, and less remarkable; but has always subsisted, and beginning from the prophecy of Jacob, was to continue till the coming of the Messiah.

We need only then open our eyes, and inform ourselves where is the tribe of Judah? in what country it rules? what authority it exercises over the other tribes? what magistrates and heads it gives to a visible republic? what difference there is betwixt it and the other dispersed tribes? Its two privileges are evidently abolished: it has no longer any priority: it no longer composes a political body, from which its magistrates are chosen: it is therefore evident, that the Messiah is come.

But how long has the tribe of Judah been thus like the others, and confounded with them? since the time of Titus and Adrian, who finished the extermination of the remains of Judah. Therefore before that time, the Messiah came; and then it is as evident, that the Messiah came before the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, and the intire dispersion of the tribe of Judah.

C H A P.

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* Dan. i.

CHAP. XI.

Second proof, that the Messiah is come, and that Christ is the Messiah. The accomplishment of the prophecy of Daniel.

THE prophecy of Daniel is no less clear, and it points out in such a particular manner the precise time when the Messiah was to appear, that it is impossible upon this article to fall into a mistake.

This prophet * was employing his thoughts on the end of the Babylonish captivity, the term of which fixed by Jeremiah to seventy years was ready to expire, when God revealed to him the time of a liberty that was infinitely more precious to man. † “ Yea, while “ I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, “ whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time “ of the evening oblation. And he informed me, and “ talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come “ forth to give thee skill and understanding. At the “ beginning of thy supplications the commandment came “ forth, and I am now to shew thee; for thou art “ greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, “ and consider well the vision. Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, “ to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, “ and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring “ in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision “ and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy. Know “ therefore and understand, that from the going forth “ of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem, unto the Messiah the prince, shall be seven “ weeks; and threescore and two weeks. The street “ shall be built again, and the wall, even in trouble- “ some times. And after threescore and two weeks “ shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and

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“ the

* Dan. ix. 2, 3. Ibid. ix. 21, &c.

“ the people of the prince that shall come, shall destroy
 “ the city, and the sanctuary, and the end thereof
 “ shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war
 “ desolations are determined. And he (Christ) shall
 “ confirm the covenant with many for one week : and
 “ in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice
 “ and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading
 “ of abominations, he shall make it desolate, even un-
 “ til the consummation, and that determined shall be
 “ poured upon the desolate”.

This is the prophecy in its extent, which I have translated rather from the original than from the Latin version, to remove all pretext for disputation.

We cannot doubt, but that the weeks which Daniel speaks of, are weeks of years and not of days, or months, nor of a measure longer than a year. He was thinking *, as he confesses himself, of the number of seventy years, revealed to Jeremiah, which contains seven weeks of years, or seven times ten-years; and God discovers to him another duration which comprehends seven times that first, and is composed of seventy weeks. Thus seven times ten years, are the first number multiplied by seven, and are the basis; and consequently it is years of the same measure that are the foundation of both revolutions; otherways the computation would become uncertain; whereas the angel declares his design of explaining all to Daniel; and this prophet, instead of marking the time, would only involve futurity in new darkness.

This single observation being made, all is clear in the prophecy: for the term of seventy weeks is fixed: their beginning when the orders were given for the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem; and their end, at the death of the Messiah. Wherefore, to find the second term, we need only be well assured of the first, which is exactly known to us by the history of Nehemiah.

This holy man tells us, that he obtained of Artaxerxes king of Persia, whose cup bearer he was, an order to repair the walls of Jerusalem; that this order was published in the twentieth year of his reign, in the month

* Dan. ix. 2.

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* Nisan, which partly answers to the month March; and that it was executed the same year, by the general assistance of all the people; and that in the sixth month the whole work was finished.

We need then only count from the twentieth year of Artaxerxes's reign, four hundred and ninety years, to which the seventy weeks of Daniel amount, to come to the end of the Messiah's life. And this computation leads us to the twenty second year of the reign of Tiberius, under whom Jesus Christ exercised his public ministry, laid down his life for the salvation of mankind, and established his church.

But in order to render the demonstration drawn from this prophecy still more clear and sensible, we must separately examine all its parts.

It is said, † that we must begin to count the weeks till the Messiah, from the day that the order shall be given for the rebuilding of Jerusalem; and we have seen that this order was given and executed in the twentieth year of the reign of Artaxerxes.

It is said, that the walls of ‡ Jerusalem shall be rebuilt in difficult times, and in the midst of many contradictions; and we learn from Nehemiah, that all the neighbouring nations opposed his design, that they were obliged to be under arms night and day, and that they held the sword || with one hand, while they were building with the other.

It is said, that not only the walls with their mote and rampart shall be rebuilt, but also that the desolate places § of Jerusalem shall be inhabited. The prophet Nehemiah explains this prophecy, by telling us, that the walls ** only inclosed the inhabited places, and that this circumstance induced the most considerable of the people †† and magistrates to settle in Jerusalem, and laid

* In the month Nisan, in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes the king (he was called Longimanus) Neh. ii. 1, 5, 7, and 17. So the wall was finished in the twenty and fifth day of the month called Elul (that is the sixth, and answers to our September) in fifty and two days. Ibid. vi. 15.

† Dan ix. 25. ‡ Ibid. || Neh. iv. 13. § Ibid. iv. 17.

** Ibid. vii. 7. †† Ibid. xi. 1.

a foundation for selecting by lot the tenth part of those who had returned from the captivity, in order to re-people Jerusalem.

This is the exact fulfilment of the first part of the prophecy, and it is not to be doubted but what Daniel predicted is precisely the same with what Nehemiah has accomplished.

In the second part of the prophecy * Daniel makes some distinction between the weeks which he had at first mentioned, as one undivided period of time, by saying, the seventy weeks are fixed with respect to your people and your holy city.

He mentions the last † week in which Christ was to establish the covenant, and this he divides into two equal parts.

He counts sixty-nine weeks to the manifestation of the Messiah.

And he composes ‡ these sixty-nine of two distinct numbers, seven and sixty-two; no doubt because the seven weeks considered by themselves, have some privilege above the rest.

At last he says, || that, after sixty-two weeks, Christ shall be put to death, which evidently supposes that the seven privileged weeks must be then expired, and the sixty-nine accomplished.

The explication of the last § week is easy: the Messiah was to employ three years and an half of it in his public ministry, and in establishing the new covenant; and the ministry of Jesus lasted just as long. In the middle of the week the Messiah was to abolish the ancient sacrifices, and Christ abolished them at that same time by offering up himself.

The seven privileged weeks, which compose forty-nine years, comprehend the whole life of the Messiah till his manifestation, and that of his mother till the day on which he was to be born. At the birth of this virgin, the promises made to Abraham and David began to be accomplished, and every event is of the greatest importance from the end of the sixty-second, to the end of the seventieth or last week.

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* Dan. ix. 24. † ver. 27. ‡ ver. 25. || ver. 26. § ver. 27.

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According to the most exact calculation, * Christ began to preach when he was about thirty three years of age. He remained nine months in the belly of his mother, who according to a tradition which deserves some respect, was then fifteen years old, and all these periods compose the seven privileged weeks of Daniel, or forty-nine years.

In the third part of the prophecy, the Messiah is pointed out by his most august characters. He is the anointed of the Lord †: he is the author of eternal justice: he is the accomplishment of all that has been revealed to the prophets: he is sent to put an end to iniquity, and he is the victim of expiation which was to abolish all sin.

Who does not know Jesus Christ by these marks and characteristics? and who on the contrary can be so stupid as to apply this description to such a Messiah as the Jews expect, a Messiah who is only great in outward appearance, and only proves the author of a temporal felicity?

In the fourth part of the prophecy it is expressly said, that the Messiah shall be put to death, and that no one † shall declare in his favor. For this purpose it was necessary that he should be rejected by the council of the nation, that the most learned should be deceived with respect to him, and that a general blindness should conceal from Israel the Messiah who was promised to them, and whom they expected.

The reign of the Messiah must have been without external splendour, pomp, magnificence, or any of the things which distinguish other kings, since no person either undertakes his defences, or opposes his death.

Envy,

* Supposing Christ was born before the death of Herod (which is indubitable) that St. John began to preach in the fifteenth year of Tiberius (which is certain) and that Christ received baptism when the whole world came to his precursor; it is impossible he should have begun his public ministry before thirty three years were accomplished.

† Dan. ix. 24,

‡ The original Hebrew imports, that no one will belong to him; and by a necessary consequence, no person will declare himself for him. Ibid. 26.

Envy, and other passions must have blackened the miracles which the Messiah wrought, and his virtue and freeness in reprehending vice, must have rendered him odious, since the whole people consented to the death of the Lord's anointed, and of him who was the author of eternal justice.

In the designs of God it was necessary that death should be the only means of expiating sin and reconciling man to heaven, since the Messiah was sent for that purpose, and that he ought nevertheless be condemned to death by men. All these circumstances necessarily depend on each other. It is therefore very surprising that Christ should remain unknown to those very persons, who by their hands accomplished a prophecy in which every thing has a tendency to discover him, and display their own crime.

In the fifth place it is said: "And the people of the * prince that shall come, shall destroy the city and the sanctuary, and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined".

History is a sufficiently plain commentary on this passage. The Romans under the command of Titus ruined the city and burnt the temple. An incredible number of calamities beset the Jews. No country has been more severely forbid them than their own, and their whole nation is so dispersed, that it now only subsists separately.

It is therefore evident that Christ is come, and that the Jews put him to death, since, the vengeance predicted has fallen upon them. The truth of this is so striking and forcible, that it cannot be denied. The periods of time are clearly fixed: the calculation of them is easy; the death of Christ and the calculation of it are evident; so that the force of reasoning can go no farther, facts alone determine the controversy. We have nothing to do but to ask the Jews, where is their temple? where is their city? where are they themselves? Their chastisement is visible, and precisely such as the prophet had predicted it; but their blindness is also fore-

* Dan. ix. 26.

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told, and is an additional proof that they have rejected the Messiah; because, after having rejected him, it is said, that they shall remain incorrigible till the time which God has pleased to appoint: * “Even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate”. This impenitence, and their chastisements shall continue. The heart of the Jews shall remain inflexible, and the justice of God inexorable.

Before I finish the description of this prophecy, I ought to illustrate what is said. † “And for the overspreading of abominations, he shall make it desolate”. For it is not probable that they should have placed an abomination, that is an idol, in the temple, which was intirely burnt by the Romans, and that Christ who cites this prophecy ‡ of Daniel, should give his disciples the accomplishment of this circumstance as a mark of the future destruction of Jerusalem, and of the necessity of going out of that city, for it was no longer time to go out of it when it had suffered the most terrible calamities, and been reduced to ashes.

The original text of Daniel does not mention the temple, but only the parts || adjacent to Jerusalem, which he calls the wings or the sides. We shall see, says that prophet, round the city and upon its counter-scarp, the abominations of desolation, that is, the profane ensigns of the Roman army, adored by it as divinities, and representing the images or symbols of its false gods. And this army which shall begin with ravaging the out-works, shall at last totally destroy the city.

Jerusalem was in scripture called the holy city, the city of the great § king. Christ and the apostles give it these names, as well as the prophets, because it was consecrated to the worship of God in a particular manner. Its walls and all the parts adjacent were solemnly consecrated

* Dan. ix. 27. † Ibid. ‡ Matt. xxiv. 15, 16, 17.

|| Al Ceneeph, upon the wings or borders. ver. 27.

§ Psal. xlvii. 3. Matt. v. 35. The city of our God, Psal. xlvii. 1. Holy city, Matt. iv. 5. xxvii. 53. The dedication of the walls of Jerusalem is related in Nehemiah, xii. 27, & seqq.

consecrated in the time of Nehemiah, and they were justly looked upon as holy, and as serving as a defence to religion.

For which reason Christ calls them a holy place, a place on which idols could not be placed without profaning it, according to * St. Mark; tho' he fully explains himself in St Luke, and by these expressions understands only the compass of Jerusalem.

Thus we learn from Jesus Christ himself, citing and explaining the prophecy of Daniel, that it is to be understood of the siege of Jerusalem, and not of the temple; and that it was then time to go out of the city, because the Roman ensigns only began to appear on its territories, and because the lines of circumvallation were not as yet made.

It was necessary to fix the sense of this part of Daniel's prophecy, to prevent the obscurity of the others; because this prophet has predicted three different desolations, and three different profanations, which some people are tempted to confound, and which consequently become obscure.

The first is that which was to happen under Antiochus, † who abolished the perpetual sacrifice, and placed an idol on the altar of the true God.

The second is that ‡ we have now explained, relating to the profanation of the walls of Jerusalem.

The third is that related in the twelfth chapter, and points at a desolation attended with profanation and impiety, without specifying what shall be || profaned.

This last profanation is placed immediately after that of Antiochus repeated a second time, but seems to be different from it.

The dates of these three different prophecies denote their order and succession. The first § is the most ancient;

* See the places of the Evangelists before cited.

† Dan. xi. 31. viii. 13.

And king Antiochus built an abominable idol of desolation upon the altar of God, 1. Macc. i. 57.

‡ Dan. xi. 27. || Ibid. xii. 11.

§ The first is dated from the third year of Belshazzar, chap. viii. 1, 12, 25.

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cient; the second * succeeds; and the third, † which seems to relate to the last times, terminates the revelations of the prophet.

C H A P. XII.

Third and fourth proofs. Accomplishment of the prophecies of Haggai and Malachi.

A R T. I.

Third proof. The accomplishment of the prophecy of Haggai.

THERE is another prophecy, which in a very accurate manner points at the time in which the Messiah was to come, and which leaves no manner of doubt but he is come. It is found in the prophet Haggai; and I shall relate it, after having established certain facts, which make it very easily comprehended.

Such of the Israelites as returned from Babylon unto Judea, by the permission of Cyrus rebuilt the altar of the true God in the first year of their return, and in the next year laid ‡ the foundations of the temple. This work was interrupted by the credit which the contiguous and hostile nations || found at the court of the king of Persia. And the work was not begun again till the second year of Darius, by the importunate solicitations of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah, who assured the people that God would protect the undertaking.

This second temple was infinitely short of the magnificence of the first, which had exhausted the immense riches of Solomon and David. The second was mean

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* The second is dated from the first year of Darius the Mede chap. ix. 1.

† The third is dated from the third year of Cyrus, which is from the last year of Daniel, chap. x. 1. xii. 13.

‡ 1 Esdr. iii. 5, 8.

|| 1 Esdr. v. 1, 2. vi. 14. See also Haggai i. 2, 4.

and small; and when the first foundations of it were laid, they * who in their youth had seen the ancient temple shed tears upon the new one, which was a proof of the misery of their nation; while the other Jews, born since the captivity, sent up shouts of joy, because the edifice was beginning to be raised.

When it was a little advanced, the scanty bounds allotted to it, and the inability of embellishing it, became more sensible. It was on this occasion that God ordered the prophet Haggai to utter what I am about to relate.

† “ Speak now to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Josedech the high priest, and to the residue of the people, saying, Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory? and how do you see it now? is it not in your eyes in comparison of it, as nothing? Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith the Lord, and be strong, O Joshua, son of Josedech the high priest, and be strong all ye people of the land, saith the Lord, and work: according to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so my spirit remaineth among you: fear ye not. For thus saith the Lord of hosts, Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land: and I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come, and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts. The silver is mine, and the gold is mine. The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of hosts”.

It is evident that all the promises included in this prophecy relate to the second temple, and that they must have been accomplished before it was burnt by the Romans. The most ordinary genius comprehends this consequence; for it is of this poor little temple, so different from the magnificence of the first, that the prophet speaks. This temple is destroyed, and has been so for

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* 2 Esdr. v. 63, 64.

† Haggai ii. 3, & seqq.

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upwards of sixteen centuries. It is therefore as long since all that God promised with respect to it, has been accomplished.

Its glory has then been greater than that of the first temple, of which God gave the plan and the design to David, * which was afterwards executed with so much wisdom and magnificence by Solomon, in which the presence of God † became sensible by the cloud which filled it, and where the first victims offered on the altar were consumed ‡ by fire which fell from heaven. But if the Messiah has not with his presence honoured the second temple, it is so far from having any advantage over the old, that it is not comparable. And who does not see that every thing is inferior in the second, if truth itself had not come to manifest itself there to men, and put an end to clouds and figures?

What is the desire || of nations, if not the Messiah? Can we give him a properer name? or is it possible to mistake him in whom all the nations of the earth are to be blessed? Now he who was to be the object of their desires, was to come into the temple built by Zerubabel: this is the person that was to raise its glory above that of the first: this is the person who was to make amends for the gold and silver § squandered away on that of Solomon. The desire of nations has therefore come thither, since the temple subsists no more: and the desire of the nations is manifestly Jesus Christ, since it was after his coming that the temple was destroyed.

God promises to give peace ** in that temple; and that peace is not a particular nor a temporal peace: it is the constant and eternal peace itself, which comprehends all other goods: it is the same thing with God's reconciliation with man. This is the work reserved for

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* 1 Chron. xxviii. 19. † 2 Chron. v. 14.

‡ 2 Chron. vii. 1.

|| And the desire of all nations shall come, and I will fill this house with glory.

§ The silver is mine, and the gold is mine: the glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former.

** And in this place will I give peace.

the Messiah: this is the fruit of his coming. Before the ruin of the temple, this peace must have been manifested in it, and it must have been concluded before its destruction.

A few years after the death of Jesus Christ, who had often taught in this temple, it was reduced to ashes. We have therefore no reason to ask, whether the Messiah is come? or whether Jesus Christ is that Messiah? The place where the temple stood has for upwards of sixteen hundred years rendered these questions useless.

God says by the prophet Haggai, * that he is once more about to shake the heavens and the earth, that this will happen very soon, and that then he will agitate all the nations. The obscurity of the first words is somewhat cleared up by the second, and these become more perspicuous by the union and connexion which the prophet places between them and the duration of the second temple; for all nations had heard the sound of the gospel, before the ruin of Jerusalem and of the temple. The name of Jesus Christ was not only famous in all the Roman empire, but had also penetrated into very distant countries. The first part of the promise must then be accomplished; and God must have for the last time shaken the heavens and the earth, since all the people were alarmed. We can therefore expect no other change of religion, since the only change which was to be made has already happened. The Messiah then, for whom this change was reserved, must necessarily be come. The Messiah must have also come before the ruin of the temple built by Zerubbabel, because it was during the subsistence of that temple, that this

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* Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land: and I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come, and I will fill this house with glory.

St. Paul, in his epistle to the Hebrews, understands these words, *Yet once, and I will shake the heavens and the earth*, the change of the ancient law, and the first state of religion: and it is evidently the literal sense of the scripture. "And this word, yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of those things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain, Hebr. xii. 27.

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* Mal. iii.

last change of religion, and the commotion of all the people, were to happen. For the Lord of hosts declares, that once more, and that in a short time, he will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea; that he will agitate all the nations; that the desire of all the people shall come; and that he will fill that second temple with glory.

The divine providence has made every circumstance plain, and adapted the proofs of the coming of the Messiah to the meanest capacities, by confining and fixing them to times and places, of which the senses are capable of judging.

• A R T. II.

Fourth proof. The accomplishment of the prophecy of Malachi.

THE coming of the Messiah is also evidently shewn by the prophecy of Malachi, which I have quoted elsewhere, and which has a great conformity with that of Haggai which I have now explained. It is conceived in the following terms: * “ Behold I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple: even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in; behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts.”

Let us ask of the Jews, who is the prince whom they expect, and who is the angel whose coming they desire, since he is to establish an eternal covenant between God and them? they will immediately reply, that it is the Messiah, and that such characters can only agree to him: they will add, that it is he who is in another place stiled by the same prophet † the Sun of righteousness, who shall come with healing under his wings.

Let us afterwards ask the prophet, when this Saviour shall come? Very soon, says he; for God is ready to send a messenger before him to proclaim his coming; and soon after he shall come himself, and appear publicly in his temple. But in what temple? in that of Jerusalem,

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* Mal. iii. 1.

† Ibid. iv. 2.

rusalem, in that which now subsists, And what proof do you give of this? why his coming quickly: Behold, he comes, says the Lord of hosts.

Is it not evident, that it would be only deceiving men, instead of instructing and comforting them by prophecies, to assure them that the Messiah is ready to come, when he is remote from our days by more than two thousand years, and that he is ready to come into a temple, which should be destroyed more than sixteen hundred years before he should appear.

We cannot here apply that passage of scripture, * “A thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday;” for in this case there is a fixed and determined time: there is an external sign, which serves as a proof to a prediction: and there is a term of years expressly connected with the duration of the temple. I grant that this expression, “The angel of the covenant shall soon come”, is according to our ideas compatible with a very long delay: but when the prophet says, that he shall come into his temple, and that he was to come into it, I am certain that he is come, since I see that the temple subsists no more. I have no occasion for any other proof to convince me; and when I am told at what time the forerunner was sent, how nearly the angel of the covenant followed him, and by what miracles he proved that he was Lord of the temple where he taught, I cannot be enough surprized how people should resist such evidence.

* Psalm. xc. 4.

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C H A P. XIII.

Continuation of the proofs, that Jesus Christ is the Messiah promised by the scriptures. The conversion of the Gentiles reserved for the Messiah, who was to bring it about by his disciples.

A R T. I.

The conversion of the Gentiles is a proof that Jesus Christ is the Messiah.

THE prophets have foretold, that he would dispel the darkness which before his appearance covered the earth; that he would enlighten the Gentiles, that he would set them as well as the Jews at liberty, and of both form but one people and one church.

* “For Zion’s sake will I not hold my peace, and “for Jerusalem’s sake I will not rest, untill the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth. And the Gentiles shall “see thy righteousness, and all the kings thy glory; “and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the “mouth of the Lord shall name.

The author of the righteousness, salvation, and glory of Jerusalem, whom the prophet desires with so much impatience, is certainly the Messiah. His light shall enlighten the universe, and the church which shall reunite the Gentiles, shall be no longer denominated synagogue, but shall bear the name of the Messiah, and be called the christian church. “† Behold my servant, “whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my soul delighteth:—I have put my spirit upon him, he shall “bring forth judgment to the Gentiles—I have given “thee for a covenant of the people, for a light to the “Gentiles; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the “prisoners from the prison, and them that sat in darkness, &c.

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* Isaiah lxii. 1, 2.

† Isaiah xlii 1, 6, 7.

There is no necessity for explaining so clear and full a text. The Messiah was to enlighten all nations, to teach them righteousness, and to deliver them from the darkness and captivity in which they were held by Satan, who has deceived them. He was chosen and sent with this design, and the conversion of the whole world was to be his work. “ * It is a light thing that “ thou shouldst be my servant, to raise up the tribes of “ Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel. I will “ also give thee a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest “ be my salvation unto the end of the earth.” “ † Behold “ I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader “ and commander to the people.”

We need only to consider the present state of the universe, in order to know whether the Messiah is come, or whether we are still to expect him. The nations which were the most strongly attached to idolatry, now worship but one true God. The Greeks and Romans, the Egyptians and Chaldeans, have rejected their idols for several ages. To whom must we attribute their conversion? it was promised to the Messiah; it was reserved for him, and it was to serve as a proof of his coming. What usurper has got the start of him? and done what he alone was to do? to what punishment shall we afterwards sentence this usurper, when the true Messiah shall come? of what use are prophecies which only serve to deceive us?

How can we not rather acknowledge a truth so clearly predicted, and so manifestly accomplished? How can we refuse the testimony of the whole world? how shut our eyes against the conversion of all the nations? how doubt of the coming of our lawful king, when the usurper is banished from every part? how ascribe to a † stranger, the glory of a work, which according to the scriptures, could only be accomplished by the Messiah?

I often affirm, that, in this case, nothing but eyes are requisite. The reasoning is reduced to facts so clear and public, that the truth of the christian religion is almost palpable and sensible; the nations formerly idolatrous

* Isa. xlix. 6.

† Ibid. lv. 4.

‡ I am the Lord: and my glory will I not give to another, Isa. xlii, 9.

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* Isa. lii
† Psalm

idolrous now adore but one God. It is Jesus Christ who commanded his disciples to undeceive them, and who assured them of success. It was to the Messiah that the conversion of the Gentiles was promised, and that great work was to be executed by those who should believe in him.

It is therefore as evident, that Jesus Christ is the Messiah, as it is, that nations formerly idolatrous are no longer such.

A R T. II.

Another proof arising from his converting the Gentiles by means of his disciples.

IT would be a weak objection to say, that Jesus Christ has not converted the Gentiles by himself *. He was to begin with the lost sheep of the house of Israel; to merit the conquest of the world by his obedience and death; not to call strangers till the children themselves had renounced the heritage; and not to substitute the Gentiles till the Messiah was rejected by his own people; so that the conversion of the Gentiles was to succeed his resurrection, and could only be brought about by his disciples.

The prophets have clearly foretold this circumstance; and it would have rendered the mission of Jesus Christ dubious and obscure, if he had by himself undertaken the conversion of all the Gentiles. “† Thou hast delivered me, says David in the person of the Messiah, “from the strivings of the people: and thou hast made me the head of the heathen: a people whom I have not known shall serve me. As soon as they hear of me, they shall obey me.” It was not then to be the Messiah who was to instruct the nations immediately, since they were to believe what they had not seen.

“Behold thou shalt call a nation ‡ that thou knowest not, and a nation that knew not thee shall run unto thee,

* Isa. liij. and Psalm xxi.

† Psalm xviii. 43, 44. ‡ Isa. lv. 5.

" thee, saith the prophet Isaiah, because of the Lord thy God, for he hath glorified thee." This signifies the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the prodigies done by his apostles.

" The time shall come, says the Messiah himself *, that I will gather all nations and tongues, and they shall come and see my glory. And I will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape of them, (from the general incredulity) unto the nations, to Tarshish, Pul and Lud, that draw the bow, to Tubal and Javan, to the isles afar off, that have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles. And they shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto the Lord, out of all nations. And I will also take of them for priests, and for Levites, saith the Lord."

Jesus Christ then would have acted contrary to the prophecies instead of fulfilling them, if he himself had undertaken the conversion of the Gentiles, instead of sending his disciples to them. Thus the conduct he used becomes a new proof of his being the Messiah †, since he has sent his apostles thro' all the earth clothed with a power of working miracles; since these apostles have made themselves understood by people of all nations, and all languages; since by baptism they have purified those who have believed in the gospel, whom they have consecrated to God as a holy offering; since they have chosen among themselves priests and Levites, to offer up a new sacrifice different from those of the ceremonial law, and by that means evinced, that the priesthood of Aaron, and the antient ministry of the Levites, were abolished; since they chose priests and Levites, not only in another tribe than that of Levi, but also among the most distant nations.

The Messiah was to do all this by his apostles, and he alone could do it. Jesus Christ has done so, in a manner which surpasses the prediction. It is therefore

* Isa. lxvi. 18, &c.

† Isa. lxvi. 19, 20. &c.

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a preternatural blindness and infatuation, not to acknowledge him, when supported by such miracles, and such a conformity with every thing the prophets have wrote of him.

C H A P. XIV.

The establishment of a sacrifice offered in all parts of the world, and predicted by the prophet Malachi, is a convincing proof, that Jesus Christ is the Messiah. Since the coming of Jesus Christ, God has rendered it absolutely impossible to exercise the law which was to last till the appearance of the Messiah.

A R T. I.

The establishment of a sacrifice offered in all parts of the world, and predicted by the prophet Malachi, is a convincing proof that Jesus is the Messiah.

WE have seen, that after the coming of the Messiah, the Gentiles shall be admitted to the priesthood; and that consequently the priesthood of the law, which excludes all those who are not of the family of Aaron, shall be suppressed. Hence it necessarily follows, that the antient victims shall be abolished, since the ministry of those who offered them shall cease, and by another inevitable consequence, a new sacrifice shall be established; since there shall be a new priesthood, that is, a new power of offering up a new sacrifice.

This proof of the coming of the Messiah would be very clear and decisive, if on the one hand it was clearly predicted, and we were not obliged to deduce it by consequences subject to be contested; if on the other hand the new priesthood, and the new victim had abolished the Jewish priesthood and the sacrifices of the law, and if all the nations should every where offer up a sacrifice attended with an external worship and ceremony

mony which should strike the eye, and which could not be eluded by allegorical interpretations.

Thanks be to heaven, the proof on both hands is compleat, and so manifest, that a man must be out of the world that can be ignorant of it! Let us begin with the prediction.

It is contained in the prophet Malachi, who after having upbraided the * priests with their negligence and avarice, proceeds thus: † “ I have no pleasure in
“ you, saith the Lord of hosts, neither will I accept an
“ offering at your hand. For from the rising of the
“ sun even unto the going down of the same, my name
“ shall be great among the Gentiles, and in every place
“ incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure
“ offering: for my name shall be great among the
“ heathen, saith the Lord of hosts. For I am a great
“ king, saith the Lord of hosts, and my name is dread-
“ ful among the heathen.”

First it is evident, that God here opposes the new sacrifice to the old ones, as being incompatible with them; that he rejects these last, and forbids them to be offered up to him.

The new sacrifice is not therefore a simple, internal and spiritual sacrifice, since such a sacrifice is not opposite to the sacrifices of the law: it is, on the contrary, the life and soul of them; and the righteous under the Old Testament dispensation always united these two kinds of sacrifices, the internal dispositions of the heart, and the external oblation of the victim.

Secondly, God opposes the new sacrifice to those commanded by the law, because the former is offered every where, whereas the latter could only be offered upon one single altar, and in one single temple.

It is therefore evident that the prophet speaks of a sacrifice properly so called; for it would be no surprising thing, that prayers should be offered up to God in all

* Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar. Who is there even among you that would shut the doors for nought? neither do you kindle fire on mine altar for nought.

† Mal. i. 10, 11, 14.

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all parts ; and the liberty of invoking him in all nations would not hinder external victims from being reserved to one single altar, and to a single temple.

Thirdly, God inclines to give a mark by which it should be known, that he shall be adored by all the nations, as it was before acknowledged that he was adored by the Jewish people : and as this mark, he gives the universal sacrifice ; as the sacrifices offered by the Jews at Jerusalem were the mark or sign of the worship which they paid him.

If we reduce the sacrifice of the nations to simple prayers and internal worship, it is much less evident that God is as great among them as he was among the Jews. Supreme adoration can only be testified by sacrifice, and only becomes public by a public sacrifice : and if the Gentiles have not this proof, that God is the great king whom they serve, and that his name is terrible among them, I should think the religion of the Jews better attested. It would still be the privilege of Judea to have God known in it, and the particular advantage * of the people of Israel, that his name should be great among them.

Every religion ought to have a real sacrifice as well as a real priesthood. To take away from it the public testimony of an infinite adoration, is to strip it of its greatest and most majestic part ; and to reduce it to simple desires, and refuse it the advantage of offering a real victim to God, is to deprive it of this public testimony.

Fourthly, the prophet Malachi does not intend simply to say, that the nations shall be converted and quit their idols : he understands something more : he predicts, as Isaiah also does, that God shall have amongst them † priests and Levites, who shall offer up to him what the people alone could not offer ; as the priests and Levites offered among the Jews, what the Jews of a private character had no right to immolate. To confound the universal sacrifice of the Gentiles with their conversion,

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* In Judah is God known : his name is great in Israel.

Psal. lxxvi.

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is to confound two very different things. To suppress the public sacrifice, which in all parts ought to serve as a testimony to Jesus Christ, is to take away the most evident proof of the coming of the Messiah. To refuse the christian church a real sacrifice, is to re-establish the sacrifices of the antient law ; for we must necessarily have recourse to signs if we have not the reality ; and if Jesus Christ is not offered up by our hands, we must represent his sacrifice as past, by the same victims which formerly predicted it.

'Tis therefore evident, that the universal sacrifice predicted by Malachi, is a visible sacrifice, is a part, and the most essential part of public religion, and that it is an external testimony, that God is truly great among the Gentiles, since they every where offer up a pure victim to him, and since by this action which includes supreme adoration, they acknowledge him for the only true God.

After what has been said, we need only ask the Jews, in what part of the world they are permitted to sacrifice, and how long it is since they lost both the altar and the temple where their fathers formerly performed sacrifice ? and after their answer, it will not be necessary to inquire what is the sacrifice offered every where. The temples, of which it constitutes the principle holiness, are in every city more conspicuous than the other edifices. The eucharist is the only, but at the same time, the universal sacrifice of the nations ; and from one end of the world to the other it is a proof, that the name of God is great and terrible among all the nations.

Thus the proof that the Messiah is come, and that Jesus Christ is the Messiah, is as clear and evident, as that the Jews are without a sacrifice, and that the Gentiles have one which is offered in every part. We have nothing more to do with the antient priesthood : the date of the victims, which could not purify those who offered them, is past. A pure oblation *, the holiness of which

* And in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering. Malach. i. 11.

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which is independent of priests and people, and which is consequently always agreeable in the eyes of God, has succeeded the figures which promised it. There is no further change to be expected, since the signs which hid the truth have disappeared, and since there is no occasion to return to shadows, after the truth is so fully manifested. The whole then must necessarily be accomplished; and after this the hope of the Jews can be only a mere illusion and infatuation.

A R T. II.

Since the coming of Jesus Christ, God has rendered it absolutely impossible to exercise the law which was to last till the appearance of the Messiah.

IF any thing was capable of undeceiving the Jews, and leading them to Jesus Christ, it would be the consideration of two truths, the evidence of which is so strong as to be confessed by themselves. The first is, that the antient law was to subsist till the coming of the Messiah; and the second, that for more than sixteen hundred years God has rendered it absolutely impossible to exercise that law.

The prophet Malachi clearly establishes the first of these truths by thus finishing his prophecy, which is the last the Jews received. "Remember ye, says the Lord *, the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments. Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers; lest I come and smite the earth with a curse."

It is not necessary to examine who that prophet Elias is, whom God promised to send; whether it is Elias in

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person,

"Neither external sacrifices nor prayers have this advantage of being always a pure offering. This can be said only of one host or victim that of its own nature is pure and holy."

* Malach. iv. 4, 5, 6.

person, or another possessed of his spirit and zeal. The question in dispute is independent of this inquiry; for it is not on this account the less evident that the prophet speaks of the coming of the Messiah, and of the forerunner who was to prepare the way for him, and that he recommends the observation of the law given to Moses upon mount Horeb * or Sinai, till the Messiah should appear. This is a proof of the first truth.

The second will be no less evident, when the reader is prepared for it by three observations.

First, God under pain of death forbids the Israelites to offer † any sacrifice to him, except before the tabernacle in which the ark of the covenant was lodged.

Secondly, God tells them, that when he has made them enter the promised land, he would point out a ‡ place for fixing the tabernacle in; that in no place else he would receive their whole burnt-offerings, nor their supplications, nor their tithes, nor their first fruits, and that it should be in that place alone, become the center of religion, that his name and his majesty should reside.

Thirdly, this privileged place remained unknown and undetermined till the time of David; for it was only by provision that the tabernacle was established at Silo in the days of Joshua: and all the places in which the ark of the covenant was lodged after it was carried from Silo under the pontificate of Eli, were no more than provisional also.

But in the time of David, God plainly told that prince and the other prophets, that he made choice of Jerusalem for a fixed and perpetual abode: || “The Lord, says David, loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob. § For the Lord hath chosen Zion, he hath desired it for his habitation. This is my rest for ever (*saieth the Lord*) here will I dwell, for I have desired it.”

This

* 'Tis the same mountain divided into two two points, one of which is called Sinai, and the other Horeb.

† Levit. xvii. 8, 9.

‡ Deut xii. 5, 6, 13, 14.

|| Psal. lxxxvii. 2. § Ibid. cxxxii. 13, 14.

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* 1 Chron

† Ibid. xx

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This preference of Jerusalem to all the other cities of Judea; did not however in a precise manner determine in what part the altar and tabernacle were to be built. But God * made it known to David by the prophet Gad; and pointed out to him the plain of Ornan as the only place in the universe, where for the future he would accept of the sacrifices commanded by the law. David understood it thus: "This is, says he, † the house of the Lord God, and this is the altar of the burnt offering for Israel". In fact, it was in this very place that the temple was built by Solomon, ‡ according to the design which David had formed, and according to the revelation which had been made to him concerning it.

The whole external worship of religion was therefore by the order of God fixed to Jerusalem, and to the temple built there; it was no longer permitted to make choice of another place. All liberty in that case was taken away; God declared he would not change his resolution; and that the choice he had made of Jerusalem, || and of the place where the altar and the temple were, should be irrevocable.

God therefore rendered external worship absolutely impracticable to the Jews, provided he took from them Jerusalem and the temple.

He therefore testified that he would no longer have that worship, when he should make the city of Jerusalem and the temple to be destroyed; when he should hinder the Jews from rebuilding them; when he should banish them for ever from their ancient heritage, and afford them no hope of ever returning to it.

Let us now take a joint view of these two truths. The law given by Moses on mount Sinai was to remain in force till the coming of the Messiah. God for more than sixteen hundred years renders the exercise of the law absolutely impossible. 'Tis therefore manifest, that the Messiah is come more than sixteen hundred years ago,

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and

* 1 Chron. xxi. 18.

† Ibid. xxii. 1.

‡ 2 Chron. iii. 1.

|| 2 Chron. vii. 16.

Psal. cxxxii. 14.

and that for this reason the external worship of the law is abolished.

Proofs which require application and speculative reasoning, are not adapted to all capacities; but in this, every thing is simple and easy, and the divine providence shines with an admirable lustre in it.

God from the beginning declares, that he will accept of no sacrifice but what is offered on the altar built before his tabernacle.

He promises to declare what place he will there prefer for the establishment of his tabernacle.

This he does in a clear and distinct manner, by making choice of Jerusalem; and in it specifying a place which he designs for that purpose.

He afterwards takes from the Jews both Jerusalem and this particular place; and for sixteen centuries he renders all their efforts to re-enter their city vain and ineffectual.

Who can reasonably doubt, that ever since that period of time God no more inclines, either the sacrifices, or the observation of the law; and that since the law was to last till the appearance of the Messiah, we must conclude that he came before it was really abolished?

The case of the captivity at Babylon, during which the Jews were deprived of Jerusalem, and of the temple, instead of weakening, corroborates the proof now advanced; for every circumstance is widely different in two states to be compared.

The time of the captivity was very short, and there is no proportion between it and an exile from Jerusalem, and a privation of the temple, which have now lasted near two thousand years.

A part of the people remained in Jerusalem itself, as well as in the other cities of Judea, when the Jews were led captive to Babylon; and the divine providence hindered foreign colonies from being sent thither, as they were into the country of the ten tribes, and prevented neighbouring nations from establishing themselves there, as they intended. Whereas in the other case, the Ro-

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mans * forbid all the Jews to enter Jerusalem after it was rebuilt, under the reign of *Ælius Adrianus*. In the time of Saint Jerom * the Jews, at a dear rate, purchased the liberty of repairing to Jerusalem to shed tears on the place where the temple had been built; and at no period of time, except during the short reign of Julian the apostate, has that severe decree been abrogated.

The prophets had predicted the end of the captivity before it happened. Jeremiah had fixed the time of it to seventy years; *Isaiah* had expressly named *Cyrus* as the prince who was to set the Jews at liberty. He had said, that Jerusalem shall be rebuilt before it was destroyed, and that the temple should be founded a second time before it was burnt. *Ezekiel* in a heavenly vision had seen the plan of the city and temple, and had pointed out the proportions of them as more august indeed than those of the city and temple which should be really rebuilt, reserving, at the same time, a caution with respect to what they should once be. In this case every thing is contrary to what it was in the state of the captivity. There are no longer any prophets; every one is silenced; every thing denotes the wrath of God; all consolation is refused, and it is manifest, that the crime which is so severely punished, is greater than idolatry, the chastisements of which have been always mixed with hopes, and limited to some particular time; and that this crime can be

* Euseb. hist. Evang. l. 4 c 6.

Tertull. contra Judæos. c. 15.

Idem. Apologet. c. 16.

Greg. Nazian. orat. 12.

† Usque ad præsentem diem perfidi coloni, post interfectionem servorum, et, ad extremum, filii Dei, excepto planctu prohibentur ingredi Jerusalem; et ut ruinam suae eis flere liceat civitatis, pretio redimunt: ut qui quondam emerant sanguinem Christi, emant lacrymas suas, et ne fletus quidem eis gratuitus sit. Videas in die quo capta est à Romanis et diruta Jerusalem venire populum lugubrem, consuere decrepitas mulierculas, et senes pannis annisque obfisos, in corporibus et in habitu suo, iram Domini demonstrantes. Congregatur turba miserorum, et patibulo Domini coruscante, ac radiante, *ἀνὰ δόρυ* ejus, de Oliveti quoque monte crucis fulgente vexillo, plangere ruinas templi sui populum miserum, et tamen non esse miserabilem. Adhuc fletus in genis, et livida brachia, et sparsi crines, et miles mercedem postulat, ut illis flere plus liceat. S. Hieron. in Sophon. cap. 1.

be no other than the rejection of the Messiah, because since the return from the captivity, the ancient propensity of the nation to idolatry has been the crime but of a few, and, since the Maccabees, of none of the Jews.

But what fully proves that God only took Jerusalem and the temple from the Jews, because he intended to abolish the law, and shew the most incredulous, that the Messiah, who was the end and termination of the law, was come, is what happened in the time of Julian the apostate *.

This impious prince with a design to darken this proof, and fix a lye if possible upon Christ, who had predicted that the temple, whose magnificent structure his disciples had admired, should be destroyed, and that the marks of it should not even remain; this prince, I say, exhorted the leading men among the Jews to rebuild it, assisted them with large sums, appointed a man of authority to manage the design, and for an assistant gave him the governour of the province. Julian, to the private motives of impiety and irreligion, joined that of ambition, expecting an immortal memory from the rebuilding of a temple, which the zeal of a whole nation would render eternal.

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* In the year 363, in the consulate of Julian for the fourth time, and of Sallust. Ammian. Marcellin. l. 23. in the beginning. Socrates. l. 3. Hist. Ecclesiast. c. 20.

Sozomen. l. 5. c. 22.

Theodoret. l. 3. c. 20.

Philostorgus in the extracts of his history made by Photius, l. 7. num 9.

Ammian. Marcellin. book 23. of his history in the beginning, are all agreed in the main with regard to the prodigies of this history. For it was thus the latter, who was a pagan, speaks of it.

Imperii sui memoriam magnitudine operam gestiens propagare. ambitiosum quondam apud Jerusalem instaurare sumptibus cogitabat immodicis; negotiumque maturandum Alypio dederat Antiocheni, qui olim Britannias curaverat pro praefectis. Quum itaque rei idem fortiter instaret Alypius, juvaretque provinciae rector, metuendi globi flammaram prope fundamenta crebris adfultibus erumpentes, facere locum, exustis aliquoties operantibus, inaccessum: hocque modo, elemento destinatus repellente, cessavit incoeptum.

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This nation flocked together from all parts, exhausted itself in materials and expences; in order to work upon new foundations, razed and destroyed the old, and thus verified the prediction of Christ, by not leaving one stone upon another, and abolishing the smallest marks of the former temple.

But when the Jewish nation had rendered the prophecy complete, and thought of laying the foundation of a new temple, a violent earthquake displaced the stones; a fire, whose activity seemed conducted by a secret hand, consumed the instruments and materials of the labourers; and the prodigies were so terrible, so dreadful, and so lasting, that the obstinacy of the Jews, their ardent zeal for the temple, their hatred to Christ and his church, the whole power of Julian, and all the resistance of men, were constrained to yield to them.

These facts in all their circumstances are attested by historians, who either lived at the time or very soon after; and these authors cannot be objected against as christians; since an historian, who was a great admirer of Julian, and as strongly attached to paganism as that prince, relates the same things. But what occasion have we for any other proof, than the abandoning the work? And what other cause than supernatural prodigies could force the Jews, and the peasants, animated by a haughty and impious prince, to desist from the attempt? This is the judicious reflection of Sozomenus *.

C H A P.

* Quod si cuiquam hæc incredibilia videbuntur, fidem ei faciant ii qui acceperunt ab hominibus qui res ipsi viderant, ii qui etiamnum superstites sunt, sed et Judæi ipsi ac Gentiles qui opus imperfectum dimiserunt, aut ut verius dicam, ne inchoare quidem potuerunt. Lib. 5. Hist. c. ult.

C H A P. XV.

The prophet Hosea gives a very particular account of the state to which the Jews are reduced, and such, he foretells, will continue to be their condition, as a punishment for their unbelief, till they are converted and believe in Christ. The dispersion of the Jews thro' all parts of the world, and the contempt into which they are fallen, is a strong proof that they have rejected the Messiah, and clearly demonstrates the truth of christianity, and the divinity of the scriptures.

A R T. I.

The prophet Hosea gives a very particular account of the state to which the Jews are reduced, and such, he foretells, will continue to be their condition, as a punishment for their unbelief, till they are converted and believe in Christ.

I BELIEVE I may venture to affirm, that what has been already said carries not a little evidence along with it. But there are some perhaps, who will still insist upon a farther conviction, that God himself should plainly declare that state to which the Jews are long since reduced; that he should mention the particular circumstances, and tell us the cause of their punishment; then, say they, we shall be delivered from the apprehension of deceiving our reason, when we enquire into these judgments, when God himself has revealed them to us. If this is not done, these scrupulous enquirers will not be satisfied, they will conclude there is some room left for hesitation.

If we reflect on the many proofs that have been given, then surely such a degree of doubtfulness will appear derogatory to reason as well as justice; but here the

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the goodness of God has gone beyond the highest desires of weak mortals, and we find as much, nay more than we could wish for in these words of the prophet Hosea : * “ For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an ephod, and without teraphim †. Afterwards shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king, and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days.”

Here we find the state of the Jews from the time they have refused to believe in Christ, is clearly and distinctly mentioned with all its circumstances. It has been foretold just as it has happened; the event, in every particular, corresponds with the prediction.

The cause of their present condition is likewise assigned with the same perspicuity; 'tis because they would not know the Christ or Messiah, 'tis because they would not submit to their own King, or the true David ‡. For the prophet does not say, Afterwards David their king shall come, but, Afterwards the children of Israel shall return to David their king, and they shall seek him; they shall be moved with repentance, they shall recover from their blind infatuation, and they shall return to seek him whom they have not as yet known. In rejecting

* Hosea iii. 4, 5.

† Teraphim may be taken in a good or bad sense, for lawful images, or idols. In this passage, it seems to signify, the cherubims which covered the ark. The teraphim of Micha, which is mentioned in the book of Judges, seems to have been a representation of these cherubims and the ark, as we may find by comparing what is said in chap. xvii. 5, with ver. 10. and with chap. xviii. 6, 31.

'Tis probable too that the ephod which Gideon ordered to be made, was designed as an ornament to a like representation of the cherubims of the tabernacle, since he employed for that purpose a thousand and seven hundred shekels of gold. Judges viii. 27.

‡ The Messiah was called David, because he was to descend from him, and this is a figurative expression. We find the prophets mentioned him by this name, a considerable time after the death of David. Hosea began to prophesy in the reign of Hosias the eleventh successor of that prince.

rejecting him, they have also treated with the same disregard, him by whom he was sent. They have renounced the Almighty for their God, since they have refused to submit to his Christ: before then they can return to the Father, or seek him with success, they must first return to his Son, and seek him with true fervour and devotion.

They have forfeited all claim to the mercy of God, and the most excellent gift which goodness itself could confer, by their not receiving Jesus for the Christ. By him, God was willing to have shed abroad the effects of his goodness; by him, justice and grace was to be extended to all mankind. But they have not known the value of this inestimable blessing which God stretched out to them; at last, however, they will know it, and they will seek him whom they have so long neglected.

The humble appearance of a God who stooped so low as to put on the human nature, hindered them from perceiving his divinity; but the time will come, when they shall adore his humiliation, and prostrate themselves before his cross; the time will come, when they shall tremble before his presence, and feel that awful terror which divine majesty is apt to strike into mortals; then they will make no difference, but worship the Father and Son with the same adoration. As to the particular time, when the conversion of the Jews is to be brought about, in this the prophet is not instructed, only that it will be in a very remote space of time, "In the latter days," when as it were, all hopes of its ever happening are vanished, then it will be accomplished. What has hitherto happened, shews a deal of truth in the words of the prophet. The divine wrath still continues against the Jews, and notwithstanding so many ages have passed, yet the time when God will be reconciled to them, still remains as great a mystery as ever.

These prophecies of Hosea, as they lead us into so many important discoveries, they therefore claim our highest attention, especially in these two particular points; the state of the Jews at present, and the continuance of that state. For these two circumstances are additional

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additional proofs of the truth of christianity, the divinity of the scriptures, and the coming of the Messiah. But by divine and infallible inspiration, could the prophets come at the knowledge of so many particulars, so difficult to be believed, almost impossible to be connected, and seeming quite improbable to be continued?

ART. II.

The dispersion of the Jews thro' all parts of the world, and the contempt into which they are fallen, is a strong proof that they have rejected the Messiah, and clearly demonstrates the truth of christianity, and the divinity of the scriptures.

THE Jews were the guardians of the scriptures, in their hands was deposited the promise of the Messiah; for this reason it was necessary they should continue united as a people, and unmixed with other nations, till all the divine books were wrote, and acknowledged to be inspired writings, and till the Messiah, by his coming, should fulfill the promises.

Had the dispersion of that people happened sooner, then the authority of the holy scriptures could not have proved so universal, the proofs might have been destroyed, and but a very few would have remained as testimonies of their truth.

The same would have been the case with the Messiah: had he made his appearance after the dispersion of the Jews; his miracles, actions, doctrine, death and resurrection, and the rise of his church, would all have been involved in innumerable perplexities; the number of those who had been spectators of his wonderful performances, would have been very inconsiderable; and the whole body of the people could not have come at the knowledge of them, but by reports which would have had but little authority to enforce them.

But when the seal was put on the scriptures, when all the prophecies were fulfilled by the coming of the

Messiah; then it was necessary the Jews should be dispersed thro' the whole world, that they might carry the scriptures along with them, and become evidences of their truth; and that by their dispersion, they themselves might become living witnesses of the Messiah's being come, who had been so long promised.

The promises of God were designed, at first, for the particular advantage of the Jews, till they at last rendered themselves unworthy of them; the prophets spoke to them alone, till they had put to death the God of the prophets.

As soon as they had forsaken the promises and the Messiah, and left them to the Gentiles, then they were obliged of necessity to give up their records; or at least to make them public, and bring proofs that they had been hitherto the rightful possessors of what they now had quitted.

Without this, all the labour of the apostles would have been in vain; the truth of every prophecy would have been disputed: of some it would have been said, that the Messiah was not at all meant by them; it would have been affirmed of others, that they had been framed, after the event, which they pretended to foretell, had actually happened. It would even have been denied, that there had been any tradition, relating to the Messiah, or that he had ever been promised. The testimony of a few Jews who had been converted, would have been suspected, and tho' it had not, yet this testimony would have been seldom to be met with.

It was therefore requisite, that there should be witnesses every where, and these too enemies, who should spitefully oppose the faith of the Gentiles, and who should be constrained by speaking the truth, to prepare them for the reception of it; who should establish all the principles of christianity, reject the most evident consequences of it, and contribute to make Christ adored by all the people, by shewing them with what blindness they themselves had rejected him.

Hence we see the reason, why God did not deprive the Jews of their own country, till the coming of the Messiah, and why afterwards he scattered them thro'

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all corners of the world, where the apostles had orders to go. * “ I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob, saith the Lord. For lo, I will command, and “ I will sift the house of Israel amongst all nations, “ like as corn is sifted with a sieve, yet shall not the “ least grain fall upon the earth †.” All nations have helped to put this order in execution, and they have all endeavoured to hinder the Jews from reuniting and becoming a separate people. Their dispersion has a perfect resemblance to the grains of corn which are separated by a violent motion, and so scattered into different places.

And another prophet says, ‡ “ God shall let me see “ my desire upon mine enemies. Slay them not, lest “ my people forget : scatter them by thy power ; and “ bring them down, O Lord our shield.”

Here is then another reason for the dispersion of the Jews. As it was with Cain ||, so it was with them ; they bear the impression of the divine wrath stamped upon them ; like him, they are become fugitives and vagabonds, filled with horror, and stung with the remorse of conscious guilt, yet not to such a degree as to produce a true repentance ; by this means letting every nation know, that they have shed the blood of righteous Abel, and according to their imprecation § his blood is upon their heads, and the divine vengeance is fallen upon them and their children.

They are a lesson to the Gentiles, who in their room have been admitted into the divine favor, to be careful not to act unworthy of that mercy which has been shewn to them ; and to dread the divine justice, when they behold so formidable a monument of it. When they consider this, it ought to recall into their minds that condition wherein they remained, before they were called to a state of grace, and what may be their fate if they prove ungrateful to so bountiful a benefactor.

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* Amos ix. 8, 9.

† Psal. cix. 10. Psal. lxix. 25.

‡ Psal. lix. 10. 11.

|| Gen iv. 14.

§ Matth. xxvii. 25. Gen. xlii. 22.

They ought to learn from this too, to be grateful and humble *, since they are no more than the branches of a wild olive-tree in respect of the natural branches of the good olive-tree, which however were cut off for their infidelity, to give place to the faith and conversion of those who were strangers to the covenant and the promises.

These things perhaps the Gentiles might be apt to forget, were they not daily reminded by the scattered Jews, who sound in their ears this important piece of instruction, "Be not high minded †, but fear." Compare your present with your former state; compare that in which we now are, with that of Abraham and the prophets: behold from what a wretched low state, by grace you have been exalted; see from what a glorious height we have fallen. At present, we live intirely to keep you in remembrance of the divine favours heaped upon you, and our punishment lasts to be a means of preventing your falling into the same. The blood of the Messiah is required at our hands; but if you do not profit by our punishment, then our blood will be upon your heads. For God's justice continues upon us, only to intimidate you, by a monument of his vengeance, so lasting and terrible. "Slay them not, O God, lest my people forget [your mercies] but scatter them by thy power, and bring them down, O Lord our shield."

The latter part of this prayer of the Messiah, which desires that the Jews may be preserved, ‡ but brought low, has been accomplished, as well as that of their being scattered. They are fallen into universal contempt ||. Amongst all nations they are looked upon as the very refuse and reproach of mankind. Some nations have driven them out, and have expressly forbid them to come into their territories: others have marked out a particular quarter for them, the limits of which they are not allowed to pass. 'Tis not only those of

* Rom. xi. 22. Rom. xi. 17. 18.

† Rom. xi. 20, 21.

‡ Psal. xl. 14.

|| Psal. cvii. 40. Jerem. xxix. 18.

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the true faith, but also those of false persuasions in religion, who entertain a horror against them. The very name of Jew is become opprobrious. Those who are enlightened with revelation, as well as those who are not, in the same manner look upon this wretched people as a lifeless carcass, struck with a judgment from heaven, and sending forth a nauseous smell, such as is occasioned by death. Yet after all, if we lay aside the unbelief of that people with regard to the Messiah, we shall then find, that they have had advantages infinitely surpassing all nations of the world. They are the only people to whom divine revelation and the scriptures have been entrusted. * With them alone God has made a covenant, and given promises; to them alone has he sent his prophets, and promised a Messiah; they alone were honoured with a Messiah to be sprung from them; they alone were instructed by God in person, and became the only witnesses of his miracles and mysteries: 'twas from them only that God chose out his disciples and apostles, and to them are the whole world indebted for their knowledge of the truth.

But all these blessings are now brought to an end, because they have not believed in Jesus; and what is very surprizing too, all nations know, that it was because of their unbelief that they forfeited these advantages which they had before enjoyed. Who then does not perceive the strength of that expression, "Bring them down?" Who is not filled with admiration, when he considers the truth of those prophecies which foretold the dispersion and reduction of the Jews? Who does not then feel his affection greatly heightened for Jesus Christ? in following whom there is compleat happiness; whom if we once forsake, we lose all, and our condition will become full of the most unspeakable misery and wretchedness.

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C H A P.

* Rom. ix. 4. 5.

C H A P. XVI.

The preservation of the Jews, notwithstanding their dispersion, and the contempt into which they are fallen, is a fresh proof of Jesus Christ's being the Messiah, and the time will come, when they will acknowledge him to be such.

THE dispersion of the Jews, and that universal contempt into which they fell, are wonderful facts; but neither of them is so extraordinary, as the preservation of that people for so many ages, notwithstanding they are scattered thro' all corners of the earth, and their being so much hated by all nations in general.

If providence had not been remarkably concerned in their preservation, can we imagine that a disjointed people, as they were, separated into an infinite number of families, and banished into other countries, where different languages as well as customs prevailed; can we suppose, I say, that they would not long ago have been confounded and lost amongst other nations, so that the least trace of them would not have remained?

For they not only have no form of a republic subsisting, but they have not so much as one city, where they can live according to their own laws, and be directed by their own magistrates; neither have they the advantage of a free and public exercise of their religion, their priests have not the exercise of their office; their sacrifices are suppressed; and their festivals cannot be observed, unless it is in one particular place, and this place they are not allowed to go to.

Whence comes it then that they, who have not the means whereby other people keep themselves together, should still be preserved amongst so many different nations? How comes it, when they have been thus scattered into so many different corners, like dust which cannot be perceived, that they should still so long survive the

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the dissolution of their own state, as well as that of many others?

Who at present is able to single out the true descendants of the ancient Romans, from amongst that crowd of people who are now inhabitants of Italy? Who can so much as distinguish one family which is of Gallic extraction, from those which have another original? Or who can find out those who are sprung from the ancient Spaniards, and distinguish them from the posterity of the Goths who conquered Spain? All nations in the east, as well as west, wear a different face from what they did formerly: all the people are blended together in numberless different manners. 'Tis only upon mere conjectures, and these very frivolous too, that any family can trace its original further than the public revolutions which have happened in their state.

But the Jews, by a tradition, the thread of which no public nor private calamity has been able to break through, go up as far as the ancient stock of Abraham. They may sometimes indeed be mistaken in telling what tribe they belong to, because, after their dispersion they had no public records, which at the same time is a proof that their law is abolished, since neither the priests nor the Levites can give any authentic proofs that they are of the family of Aaron, or belong to the tribe of Levi: but all of them have been particularly careful in instructing their children that they were of a different original from the Gentiles, being descended from the patriarchs, so much taken notice of and praised in scriptures. That universal contempt into which they are fallen, ought to have been a strong inducement to make them incorporate themselves with other powerful nations, and to conceal whatever might serve to distinguish them: instead of this, by making a separation from those who had authority, they only brought upon themselves their hatred and derision; nay, in several places they exposed themselves to death, by bearing about with them the outward marks of circumcision. All human considerations made it their interest to wear out the blemish of their original, by which they suffered so much infamy and scorn.

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When the Messiah came they did not believe in him, and after his departure they still expected his coming; and when they saw, as it seemed to them, his arrival more and more delayed, then they looked upon the promises of their learned men, relating to the Messiah's making his appearance very soon, to be false; so that the predictions of the prophets, the knowledge of which they had lost, appeared to them to be wrapt up in darkness; and all their calculations went so far as the time of Christ, but advanced no further; * infomuch that many of them not having courage to encounter these difficulties, sunk at once into an utter unbelief of all scripture.

Yet notwithstanding all this, they still subsist and increase, and still remain in a state of separation from all other people; notwithstanding they are so generally hated by all nations, to whose hatred they are obnoxious, and under whose power they are subjected; I say, in opposition to all these obstructions from men, still they are miraculously preserved, in a manner that no other people has hitherto been.

Whoever is the least susceptible of admiration or a astonishment, must surely be struck with both when he considers this surprizing miracle; and that man must indeed have a very strange notion of providence, who does not see it plainly manifested in this.

But the divine Being is far from keeping us in the dark here, for he has declared by his prophets, that this wonderful preservation of the Jews is the work of his own hand. "Fear thou not, O Jacob, my servant, † faith the Lord, for I am with thee, for I will make a full end of all the nations whither I have driven thee, but I will not make a full end of thee. but correct thee in measure, yet will I not leave thee wholly unpunished."

This promise was made to the ancient patriarchs, for whom God has reserved a posterity to inherit their faith, and

* For a great many ages the Rabbies would not allow any calculations of time to be made, because they all led you to the time of Christ. *Rumpatur spiritus eorum qui supputant fines, or, temporum terminos.* Vide Buxtorf,

† Jer. xlv. 28.

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and to the rest of Israel, who in the latter days should believe in Christ.

It is for their sake that the unworthy offspring of the unfaithful is borne with ; it is to keep up a communication betwixt the patriarchs and their posterity, that this undeserving people is still preserved, amidst those punishments, which for their crimes long ago ought to have overwhelmed them.

Here we must remark, that it is to the Jews alone this promise is made ; that all other nations shall be altogether rooted out, * or so jumbled one amongst the other, that they cannot be distinguished ; and that it is intirely owing to the influence of God's word, that the Jews have been so long preserved from that variety of dangers which threatened them from all hands, and in which they deserved to have been crushed.

“ Thus saith the Lord, if my covenant be not with day and night, and if I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth : then will I cast away the seed of Jacob, and David my servant, so that I will not take any of his seed to be rulers over the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob : for I will cause their captivity to return, and have mercy on them.” In what has been just now said, we may see the promise, and the end of that promise. The time will come when the Jews will be called to mercy, and it is upon the account of those who shall be thus reinstated in the divine favor, that all the rest have been so long borne with by the patience of God, and preserved by his power.

“ Thus saith the Lord, † who giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and stars for a light by night, who divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar ; the Lord of hosts is his name. If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever. Thus saith the Lord, if heaven above can be measured, and
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‡ I will make a full end of all the nations whither I have driven thee, but I will not make an end of thee. Ibid.

* Jer. xxxi. 35, 36, 37.

" the foundations of the earth searched out beneath,
 " I will also cast off all the seed of Israel, for all that
 " they have done, saith the Lord."

As if he had said, the heavens and earth shall sooner pass away, than the Jews shall cease to be a people distinguished from all others. The same power which has given laws to the universe, likewise upholds and preserves them. And tho' they have crowned all their iniquities by that unparalleled crime which they were guilty of in crucifying the Saviour who was promised to their forefathers, yet God will not withdraw his promise, nor will he allow the posterity of Jacob to be quite rooted out.

Whence did the prophets derive that light, which emboldened them to talk in a manner so lofty and sublime, of a thing that was so improbable as the duration of a people that was so weakened, and so much scattered every where, so universally hated, and who had been guilty of the most atrocious of all crimes?

Who then can doubt of the truth of the rest of the prophecies, when he sees this one so fully accomplished? What proof more astonishing can we wish to be given us for the truth of the christian religion than these two events joined together, the dispersion of the Jews, and their preservation for seventeen hundred years? Either of them, separately taken, almost exceeds belief, and greatly surpasses it when they are both united; but both of them are necessary to attest that Christ was the Messiah.

As a punishment for having rejected him, it was necessary they should be banished into all parts of the earth, and carry along with them the scriptures; wherever they went they were looked upon as Deicides, and met with the greatest shame and reproach.

But in order to fulfil the promises made to the patriarchs, it was necessary that their banished posterity should be some time or other recalled; and being delivered from their blind infatuation, they should adore him whom Abraham had so much wished to see, and

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The Jews being thus punished and scattered up and down, yield a strong testimony in favour of Christ; and when they are converted and re-admitted into the divine favour, then they will give another and more illustrious proof. Their being so long preserved by an uninterrupted miracle, in order to keep up the race and succession of those who one day will believe in Christ, affords a third and lasting proof that Christ is the Messiah.

Their punishment alone would only have been an argument for God's justice. Their preservation alone would only have demonstrated his power. Had they not been reserved one day to adore him, then they could not have been examples of his mercy, and exactness in fulfilling his promise, nor would they have made atonement for their offences.

Their dispersion points out to us, that the Messiah is come, and that they have refused to acknowledge him. Their preservation proves, that they are not to be rejected for ever, and that the time shall come when they will believe in him.

Both these facts serve to shew, that Christ is the Messiah, and the promised Saviour: that their not owning him to be so, has brought upon them all their present misery: and that all the hope remaining for them is, their being brought one day to acknowledge him.

Here it would be unbecoming any one to ask, why God has preserved the Jews so considerable a time, without enlightening them, or why he has allowed so great a space of time to intervene betwixt the patriarchs and the conversion of their children. It would, indeed, be attempting to measure the heavens above, or to search out the foundations of the earth beneath, if we should thus pretend to find out the unsearchable ways of God, or to sound the depths of his wisdom. He has set boundaries to the unbelief of the Jews, † as well as to the

* Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it and was glad. John viii. 66.

† Rom. xi, 32. 33.

the ingratitude of the Gentiles. His justice and mercy follow one another, and tho' his promises are sure to be performed, yet none can say when he will accomplish that promise which he has made to the latest posterity of Israel.

"But now thus saith the Lord who created thee, O Jacob, * he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: "for I have redeemed thee. I have called thee by thy "name, thou art mine. When thou passest through "the waters, I will be with thee; and thro' the rivers, "they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest thro' "the fire, thou shalt not be burnt; neither shall the "flame kindle upon thee. Fear not, for I am with "thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather "thee from the west. I will say to the north, Give up; "and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from "far, and my daughters from the end of the earth; even "every one that is called by my name: for I have "created him for my glory, I have formed him, yea, "I have made him. Bring forth the blind people that "have eyes, and the deaf that have ears."

This prophecy, so full of wonder in every circumstance, is addressed to Jacob, the head of the tribes of Israel, and inheritor of the promises of a Messiah, and salvation.

His posterity are dispersed thro' all corners of the earth. Behold in what a state the Jews remain ever since the time of Christ!

Their dispersion is a punishment inflicted on them for being spiritually blind and deaf; and to what a degree must they have been so, not to have known Christ, and not to have believed the truth to be in him, since he proved his divine mission by such a number of different miracles.

Their condition appeared full of despair. The waters threatened to swallow them up, and flames of fire surrounded them on all sides: but the divine providence attends and delivers them every where.

This protection is granted to the whole body of the people, in consideration of those who shall one day call upon

* Isai. xliii. 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8.

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upon his name, which the rest have highly dishonoured by their blasphemies.

God, in his infinite mercy, will soften their hearts, and make them open to conviction, when they throw off their former unbelief. They will be under the influence of grace, to which they will intirely owe their repentance and conversion.

They shall not then begin to see a new object, but one which their own blindness has not allowed them hitherto to perceive. They shall not then listen to a master who only made his appearance a little time ago, but one whom their own obstinate and wilful deafness hindered them from hearing.

The change shall be in their own persons, not in the religion. It will remain unvariable the same as it is now, but they shall at last begin to form some idea of its beauty and truth. Christ will withdraw the veil which obscures their sight, but he himself will continue the same. * He shall cure their deafness, and make them understand his doctrine, tho' it be the same as was advanced before.

Nothing then can be more evident, than that the Jews have been preserved by God, and that the whole body of that people subsists now by the power of that promise, which is to bring into Christ the rest of the Jews. "Bring forth the blind people that have eyes, and the deaf that have ears."

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P

CHAP.

* Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever
Heb. xiii. 8.

C H A P. XVII.

The scriptures prove that Christ is the promised Messiah, by foretelling the blind ignorance of all the Jews, excepting a very few, while at the same time they assign the true cause of it, and in very clear terms prophesy the conversion of the Gentiles.

A R T. I.

The scriptures prove that Christ is the promised Messiah, by foretelling the blind ignorance of the Jews.

WE ended the foregoing chapter with one of Isaiah's prophecies, which we apprehend expresses very plainly the promise of the restoration of the Jews, "under the name of a blind people that have eyes, and a deaf people that have ears." But if there were still some who may doubt whether the Jews are here meant by this expression, this doubt can be removed by that same prophet, who has these words, "Hear, * saith the Lord; ye deaf, and look ye blind, that ye may see. Who is blind but my servant? or deaf, as my messenger that I sent? Who is blind as he that is perfect, and blind as the Lord's servant? Seeing many things, but thou observest not: opening the ears, but he heareth not."

When we consider that those reproaches have been thrown out against the whole body of the Jews, and those of them too that must have been more enlightened, and more perfect than the rest; this consideration will serve to take off a good deal of that astonishment which may be apt to strike us, when we see a people that have been so long instructed by the prophets, and for so many ages expecting the Messiah, yet so blindly ignorant as not to know him when he did come.

This

This people that look upon all others to be buried in darkness, cannot be brought to think that they themselves have been deceived in the most essential point; nor can they imagine that the Gentiles, who have derived from them all the knowledge they have of a Messiah, should have more light to distinguish him than they.

It is from us, say they, that all others have received the scriptures; and from us also they ought to receive the knowledge of them. The prophets have spoke to us alone; and shall others who are utter strangers to them presume to understand the meaning of those prophets better than we do? 'Tis amongst us, and it was in our sight that all those wonders, so much regarded by Christians, were worked: or shall they pretend to be more fully instructed than the wise men who presided at our council, where every thing relating to religion was strictly examined?

This difficulty might be apt perhaps to stagger us, did not these same scriptures, which promise a Messiah, likewise foretell that he should be rejected by that very people who expected him, and to whom he had been promised, and that their blindness upon this important circumstance should be universal; did they not at the same time foretell, that those who were strangers, and unacquainted with the promise of a Messiah, should receive him and believe in him, when declared to them by the few, who by a particular grace of God were to be preserved from that unbelief, which prevailed amongst the rest of the Jews.

Thus that objection, which at first appeared so formidable, becomes a fresh proof, and a perfect demonstration that Christ is the promised Messiah, since excepting a very few remarkably distinguished by the divine grace, the whole body of the Jews have rejected him; since, as it was foretold, the Gentiles who were hitherto utter strangers to the name of a Messiah, yet received and believed in christianity as it was preached to them by the apostles. This particular circumstance is of the highest consequence, and it is necessary that we should be thoroughly acquainted with it.

The prophet *Isaiah* when he offered himself to God, to declare to his people what had been revealed to him, received this astonishing answer: “ * Go and tell this
“ people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and
“ see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart
“ of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and
“ shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and
“ hear with their ears, and understand with their heart,
“ and convert, and be healed. Then said I, Lord,
“ how long? And he answered, Untill the cities be
“ wasted without inhabitants, and the houses without
“ man, and the land be utterly desolate.”

St. John in his gospel informs us, that *Isaiah* in this prophecy means Christ; that it was his glory which he beheld, and him of whom he speaks.

The arguments which have been already advanced to prove Christ to be the Messiah, give me a right to cite the writings of the New Testament as divine, tho’ I have not as yet proved the truth of them in particular. Thus the authority of St. John will be decisive, who † affirms that this blind ignorance, prophesied by *Isaiah*, was meant in regard to the promised Messiah, and that it was in respect of him that their eyes were to be blind, and their ears deaf, and their hearts hardened.

But suppose the divine authority of the evangelist St. John should not weigh with us, are there not still two things that will appear clear in that prophecy? The first is, that this blindness foretold by *Isaiah* was to be the obstacle to the conversion and recovery of the Jews; and the second is, that this blindness will continue till their country is wasted, their cities destroyed, and they are even destitute of habitation? For what other blindness, than their ignorance of the Messiah, can be an obstacle to their conversion and recovery? or, what other than this could be punished with so universal and lasting a banishment?

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* *Isa.* vi. 8, 9, 10, 11.

† *John* xii. 37, 39, 40, 41.

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The same prophet says in another place, “ * Sancti-
fy the Lord of hosts himself, and let him be your
“ fear, and let him be your dread. And he shall be
“ for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling, and
“ for a rock of offence to both houses of Israel, for a
“ gin, and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jeru-
“ salem. And many of them shall stumble and fall,
“ and be broken, and be snared, and be taken. Bind
“ up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples.
“ And I will wait upon the Lord that hideth his face
“ from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him.
“ Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given
“ me, are for signs, and for wonders in Israel; from
“ the Lord of hosts, which dwelleth in mount Zion.”

St. Peter in his first epistle, and St. Paul in his to the
Romans, have both understood this whole prophecy to
relate to Christ; † but, tho’ we should for a little lay
aside an authority of so great weight, it will appear
evident, in the first place, that the Messiah is here
meant, since he is the person the prophet and his chil-
dren expect; and since the salvation or perdition of
the people of Israel, depend on their receiving or reject-
ing him.

Secondly, it is evident that the Messiah was to be
known but to a very few people, and that all Israel
should have their eyes shut, run against him, and stum-
ble against this stone, which was to serve as the corner-
stone to the whole building. The two houses of Israel,
that is to say, the tribes of Judah and Benjamin on one
hand, and on the other the ten tribes, shall all fall into
an equal degree of blindness. God will hide his face
from the house of Jacob ‡. The prophets alone, toge-
ther with their race, and those given them by the parti-
cular grace of God, shall know him whom they ex-
pected. The rest shall follow false guides ||, they shall

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* Isai. viii. 13, and following.

† 1 Pet. ii. 7, 8. Rom. ix. 32, 33.

‡ And I will wait upon the Lord, that hideth his face from the
house of Jacob.

|| Many of them shall stumble and fall, and be broken, and be
snared, and be taken.

go astray from the right path, and intangle themselves in snares, where they shall rather chuse to remain than get out.

In the third place, it appears plain, that the knowledge of the Messiah was a secret, and a mystery *, hidden from all but his disciples, whom God had fully enlightened; and the scriptures were no better than a book sealed up to others, since they only saw the outside, and instead of finding out the true meaning, they only helped to perplex it more and more.

Hence we see how unreasonable the Jews are, when they reproach us for not following the guides of their supreme council; to have done this, would have been the infallible means to lead us astray.

We may perceive at the same time, how unjust it is in them to affirm, that since we have received the scriptures from them, they likewise ought to be our instructors in explaining to us the meaning of those books, which have been so long in their possession: whereas we have been taught by the disciples, who have been instructed and sent by God himself; we have received our knowledge from the prophets and their children. The articles of our belief have not been framed from our invention, nor are we to submit ourselves to be instructed by a people, to whom the scriptures were no better than a book sealed up. The secret knowledge which was preserved amongst the apostles has descended to us; Christ was the key to the cypher. The few of the Jews who knew him, have taught us to know him also, while the rest of that people has been blinded with ignorance, and retained books, to the letter of which they adhered, without comprehending their genuine and salutary meaning.

In the fourth place, it is evident, that the prophet Isaiah represents himself and his two children, as a mystical sign of what was to happen to Israel †. One of them had a prophetic name, which signified that the

* Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples.

† Behold I and the children whom the Lord hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel.

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the remainder of Israel should be delivered: the other was called by one of the Messiah's names, which signified the conquests which he should make amongst the nations. Isaiah was in a peculiar sense the evangelic prophet; and these three persons inform us, that only the remainder of Israel shall be saved; that the Messiah shall extend his kingdom amongst the Gentiles, and the disciples who shall believe in him amongst the Jews, shall only consist of the prophets, and their descendants.

What has been hitherto said, will become still more evident by considering another passage from the same prophet, the whole of which claims our highest attention and regard.

" * Stay yourselves and wonder, cry ye out, and
" cry: they are drunken, but not with wine; they
" stagger, but not with strong drink. For the Lord
" hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and
" hath closed your eyes: the prophets, and your rulers
" the seers, hath he covered. And the vision of all is
" become unto you as the words of a book that is
" sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned,
" saying, read this, I pray thee; and he saith, I can-
" not, for it is sealed: and the book is delivered to
" him that is not learned, saying, read this, I pray thee;
" and he saith, I am not learned. Wherefore the Lord
" said, forasmuch as this people draw near me with their
" mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have re-
" moved their heart far from me, and their fear towards
" me is taught by the precept of men: therefore be-
" hold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work amongst
" this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder:
" for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and
" the understanding of their prudent men shall be
" hid."

It is manifest, that this prophecy is spoken with regard to the Jews. Christ applies it to them, and the thing

The eldest of these children was called *Shearjashub*, i. e. The remainder shall return.

The second was called *Mabber-shalal-baz*. i. e. Take away spoils quickly. Isa. vii. 3. and chap. viii. 3.

* Isa. xxix. 9.

thing declares itself; for in *Isaiah's* time, what other people was there, excepting the Jews, who adored the true God by a public and general worship?

It is likewise certain, that, as to the main point, on which the true sense of the scriptures depends, this people were to be in the dark, that those whom they looked upon as their guides, should mislead them, that the wisdom of their wise men should perish, and their understanding should be hid.

Hence it is evident, that the whole Jewish nation shall be misled with regard to the Messiah, who is the key of the scriptures, who is the end and accomplishment of them, and that we understand them when we know him, but comprehend nothing of them if we reject him.

But, that we may feel the strong evidence, and full weight of this prophecy, we must divide it into as many parts as the prophet himself has done.

First, he considers the whole people as seized * with a giddiness, wavering, and undetermined, unsteady in their measures, and inconsistent in their conduct, resembling in every thing a man intoxicated with wine, who reels to and fro, and is incapable of exercising his judgment. This was the first effect which the forerunner, and the miracles of Christ, first produced on the Jews in general, but especially on their guides and teachers: they knew not which side to incline to. The strong evidence of these miracles made an impression on them, but this was soon erased by envy which pushed them to the other side. They saw irresistible truth, and at the same time it gave them pain to see it. They advanced one step, but soon moved back again.

From this condition they sunk into another which was still worse; but a just punishment inflicted on them for their unbelief. They made it their business to throw obscurity upon all the proofs which Christ gave of his divine mission, and to deny every thing which was not done in their own sight, and to fix an ambiguous

* Stay yourselves and wonder, cry ye out, and cry: they are drunken, but not with wine; they stagger, but not with strong drink.

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ous meaning upon the clearest facts ; yet notwithstanding all the pains they took, there were still some miracles which carried such irresistible evidence along with them, that they could not doubt the truth of them, but these they imputed to the operation of some devilish spirit. Thus, these persons whom the people listened to as their prophets, and followed as their guides, became the greatest enemies to truth, and consequently incapable to discern it. God poured out upon them the spirit of deep sleep, he closed their eyes: he threw a veil over them, to conceal from their sight what they did not like to see.

In this temper of mind they consulted the scriptures, not with a design to get instruction, but to draw from thence what they thought might strengthen their prejudices ; for they were to them as a book shut and sealed up *. They could know nothing there, since they were determined not to know Christ ; they could go no further than the mere outside, that is to say, the seals only, which concealed from them the most valuable part ; and they placed their own foolish conceits in opposition to the true knowledge of these sacred writings ; and instead of the prophetic revelation, they adopted their own dreams.

Hence the whole Jewish nation were incapable of viewing things in a true light ; for the people in general could not read †, that is, of themselves they could not understand the scriptures ; their teachers had not the key, and they spent their time in considering a book which was sealed up on all sides, broaching their own whimsical fancies, instead of perusing and finding out the true meaning of the scriptures, proclaiming their own sentiments in place of divine revelation.

In Isaiah, the people and their teachers make a plain honest appearance. The people confess their ignorance, and

* The vision of all (*i. e.* the true prophets) is become unto you, as the words of a book that is sealed.

† Which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, and he saith, I cannot, for it is sealed : and the book is delivered to one that is not learned, and he saith, I am not learned.

and their teachers acknowledge the book to be sealed up from them. But what we have mentioned is rather to render the thing more striking, than to shew the dispositions of the people or of their teachers; tho' at the same time the people were more sincere than their instructors, whom Christ reproaches for being more blind than the rest *, and more incurable too, because they imagined themselves to be quite clear-sighted.

A R T. II.

The scriptures assign the true cause of the blindness of the Jews, with regard to the Messiah, who is Jesus Christ.

IT may be asked perhaps, why God permitted a nation, who had been hitherto greatly distinguished, and entrusted with the scriptures, thus to fall into such ignorance? Or why the true sense of their writings was hidden beyond what their understanding could fathom? Why were they as a book sealed up to their teachers? And to render them still more obscure, why did God cast a veil over the eyes of their rulers and priests?

But God has been graciously pleased to anticipate all these questions; and, by the answer which he has given, he has shewn at once the strictness of his justice, and the profound wisdom of his conduct; and he gives a useful piece of instruction to all those, who search into the meaning of the scriptures.

“ This people, whom I have trusted, saith the Lord, draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me.” They are careful to observe the institutions of men, which put no controul upon their passions, and they aim at nothing but an outward sanctity, whilst they neglect my law, which is a check to their loose desires.

As they have done by me, so do I with them †. In my conduct to them, I pursue the same method which they

* John ix. 41.

† I will proceed to do a marvellous work amongst this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder.

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they have with me; and as they have given me only an outward shew of honour, so do I present them only with an outside. They address me in words, while they endeavour to hide from me their thoughts: I likewise speak to them, whilst I keep my sentiments wrapped up in obscurity. They love temporal promises more than those which have real blessings for their objects, and which I disguise under the other. They are not in love with true justice, and they satisfy themselves with an outward shew of religion: I keep them busied with this outside, which I make use of as a veil to conceal that inward worship which shall be manifested in its due time. They prefer the traditions of men to my law, for which reason I amuse them with the histories and actions of men, under which I conceal the principal actions of the Messiah.

They expect him under the appearance, according to the idea they have formed of him, of an earthly prince; and in the representation I have given them of him, I have given them some marks, a little resembling their idea of him, which they have been more touched with than all the others, which might serve to instruct and rectify them concerning what they have been mistaken in. They love not me, nor him whom I have sent to them. I punish the darkness of their heart by that of their understanding; and am so far from trusting them with my secret, that I use precaution against them, as against an enemy who would abuse my confidence.

The preaching and miracles of the Messiah, who shall proclaim true justice and real blessings, instead of removing their unreasonable temper of mind, shall only contribute to make them more and more uneasy. They will not be able to bear the rays of light striking upon them, and they will prefer darkness, in which, as a punishment, shall they remain; and their blindness shall be so universal, that there shall hardly be any of them sensible of it.

Then shall happen what is almost incredible, or what shall fill the whole world with astonishment, and is almost impossible to be conceived; that a people who have been so long entrusted with the scriptures, shall not be able

able to comprehend them ; that a people instructed by the prophets, shall reject him who has been promised to them, and whom they have so long expected ; that the very men who live in hopes of the Messiah, shall put him to death. The marvellous chastisement which I have reserved for this people, is that the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid.

So that the Messiah's being rejected in the assemblies of their wise men, and by the authority of their expounders of the law, is so far from creating a prejudice against the Messiah, that it is one of the tokens by which we would have him known ; and for this reason it is foretold, that the more surprizing and improbable the event may appear, it may the more agree with what was foretold.

It is this marvellous event, so fatal to their nation, that the prophets have lamented so long before it came to pass. " We wait for light (say they) * but behold " obscurity ; for brightness, but we walk in darkness. " We grope for the wall like the blind, and we grope " as if we had no eyes : we stumble at noon-day as in " the night ; we are in desolate places as dead men. " We rore all like bears, and mourn sore like doves : " we look for judgment, but there is none ; for salvation, " on, but it is far off from us. For our transgressions " are multiplied before thee, and our sins testify against " us".

Not one of these affecting expressions ought to escape our particular notice. The calamity which the prophet feels is a general one : it does not consist in any temporal loss, but in a blind ignorance. This blindness does not proceed from the light's not showing itself, but from their not perceiving it †. It is broad day light, it is noon, yet they stumble blindfold against every thing that comes in their way. The people have no guides whom they can follow. The guides themselves grope like the rest in the dark. The salvation promised to that people is afar off, and removed to others. The judgment pronounced by their men of wisdom and understanding

* Isa. lix. 9, &c.

† We stumble at noon-day as in the night.

in the most interesting point, has been false, and has thrown them all into error. All their other crimes have been punished by this last, which has crowned all the rest. For this the prophets are full of sorrow and unspeakable grief. But neither the misleaders nor the misled feel the misery of their condition, because they are in the state of the dead *, and their own blindness hinders them from perceiving the loss they sustain, when they are deprived of the benefit of light.

According to all human conjecture, there seemed nothing more improbable to happen than this marvellous event. And the more improbable it was, it became still the stronger proof of the truth of these scriptures which foretold it; and serves more to demonstrate that Christ is the Messiah that was promised, since the general blindness of the Jews moved them to reject him.

A R T. III.

The scriptures prove that Christ is the promised Messiah, by foretelling the blind ignorance of the Jews, while at the same time they assign the true cause of it, and they prophesy the conversion of the Gentiles.

HAD they received the Messiah, I should have thought it my duty to reject him; because I am assured, that they were to be mistaken in this highest concern of religion. And the more universal the rejection of him was, the more this serves to convince me of his divine mission. Whatever their judgment dictates to them, mine is quite opposite to it; whatever they do not believe, I must. Him whom they reject, I receive; and then I am sure that I take the right road, because the divine Being informs me that they have gone astray.

Let me consider a little then whether the Gentiles have worshipped him whom the Jews crucified; because this second marvellous event, still more incredible than the first, is given me as the final token by which I may discover the true Saviour. I learn

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then;

* We are in desolate places as dead men.

then that all submitted to him; the images fell down; the capitol humbled itself; and the emperors that embraced the faith, place the crucifix in the most conspicuous part of their crowns. I can no longer hesitate, I fly to embrace the truth, and struck with admiration, I prostrate myself before Christ; and since his own did not receive him*, and strangers worship him, these two signs are united, and there appears a compleat proof, that this is he whom the prophets, before his coming, have distinguished by these marks. "I am fought of them that asked not for me; I am found of them that sought me not: I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name†. "I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people, which walked in the way that was not good, after their own thoughts." Thus it appears, that the unbelief of the Jews, and the belief of the Gentiles, warrant me; and these two wonderful works contribute greatly to strengthen and confirm my faith.

C H A P. XVIII.

Christ is proved to be the Messiah, because the prophets have distinguished those of Israel who were to remain at the coming of the Messiah, by these very marks, which perfectly agree with the remainder of Israel at the coming of Christ.

A THIRD marvellous work presents itself, extremely remarkable in all its circumstances; and as I heartily desire to profit by it, I propose to examine it with the greatest attention.

Altho' the body of the Jewish nation in general fall into unbelief, yet God promises that he will reserve for himself a small remnant of true Israelites, which in regard to the whole is inconsiderable. And this remnant shall

* John i. 11.

† Isa. lxx. 1, 2.

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shall have these three characteristics: they shall shine in virtue; they shall be invincible; and they shall enlighten the whole world. Except these, the whole nation shall sink into obscurity, and become in a manner lifeless: nor shall their numbers increase, until the latter days, when their scattered remains shall be gathered together; then they shall enrich all nations, and become the hope and glory of the church

These things I shall first consider separately, and then apply them to my present purpose.

The number of those then, who are to believe in the Messiah, must be very inconsiderable when compared with the nation in general, whose unbelief the prophet complains of in these words: "Who hath believed," says he, our report, * and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? that is to say, to whom is the design of sending the Messiah known? "The Lord hideth his face from the house of Jacob †. He shall be for a stone of stumbling to both the houses of Israel ‡."

"The remnant shall return, even the remnant of Jacob, unto the mighty God ||. For tho' thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant of them shall return: the consumption decreed shall overflow with righteousness. For the Lord God of hosts shall make a consumption, even determined in the midst of all the land."

Here are two characteristics joined together; those whom God shall reserve for himself, are to be but a small remnant of all Israel: but this is to be a valuable remnant, and to overflow with righteousness, that is, their virtue is to be great and illustrious.

The same distinguishing marks of a number that is small, and of great righteousness, are taken notice of in another prophecy, where is likewise mentioned that courage and zeal, which the remains of Israel shall shew, in declaring to all mankind the glory of the Messiah: the divine spirit speaks of it in this manner §: "When thus it shall be in the midst of the land among

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* Isaiah liii. 1. † Ibid. viii. 17. ‡ Ibid. ver. 14.

|| Isaiah x. 21, 22, 23. Rom. ix. 27.

§ Isaiah xxiv. 13, &c.

“ the people, there shall be as the shaking of an olive
 “ tree, and as the gleanings grapes when the vintage is
 “ done. They shall lift up their voice, they shall sing
 “ for the majesty of the Lord, they shall cry aloud from
 “ the sea. Wherefore glorify ye the Lord in the fires,
 “ even the name of the Lord God of Israel in the isles
 “ of the sea. From the uttermost part of the earth have
 “ we heard songs, even glory to the righteous: but I
 “ said; My leanness, my leanness, wo unto me: the
 “ treacherous dealers have dealt treacherously, yea the
 “ treacherous dealers have dealt very treacherously.
 “ Fear, and the pit, and the snare are upon thee, O
 “ inhabitant of the earth.

1. These remains of Israel resemble some olives or grapes which have been left after the vintage is done. Such comparisons as these signify, that their number is to be very small.

2. The remnant of Israel, which by the divine grace has been saved from that general infidelity, have a just sense of God's compassion to them; they are filled with gratitude, and they make the earth and sea resound with their songs, nor can all the efforts of the unfaithful put a stop to their zeal*.

3. They publish abroad the glory of the holy one, † and this too in direct contradiction to what the general council of the nation has determined. They declare his resurrection, and they preach up the christian religion, notwithstanding all their nation endeavoured to fully its lustre.

4. They not only spread the light of the gospel in Judea and the neighbouring provinces, ‡ but likewise in the most distant countries, the remotest islands, and to the furthest corners of the earth.

5. The prophet understands what they preach up. He highly regards their function, and he encourages them to behave in it worthily.

6. But

* They shall lift up their voice, they shall sing for the majesty of the Lord.

† They shall cry aloud from the sea.

‡ From the uttermost part of the earth have we heard songs, even glory to the righteous.

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6. But he does not presume to express himself in clear terms neither concerning the remnant of Israel,* nor the cause of their joy, nor the holy one whose glory they proclaim, nor the success of their preaching among the Gentiles.

7. The prophet is ordered to mingle these predictions relating to Christ and the gospel, with those which relate to the deliverance of Jerusalem when besieged by Sennacherib, to the small number of those who shall be preserved until the miraculous defeat of the Assyrians, and to their joy and thanksgivings for the divine protection given to Jerusalem and Hezekiah, whose reign was full of piety.

8. The people to whom I speak (adds the prophet) are not worthy of being admitted into my secret. They only desire a temporal liberty. They have no notion of enemies but such as are visible. A spiritual victory does not at all affect them. I am ordered to conceal from them the true Saviour, by giving him other names. Sometimes I speak of Cyrus, tho' my real inward meaning is the Messiah. Thus I am obliged to act by the most express order. The Saviour of the world loves to conceal himself. He inspires me with expressions which are only agreeable to him, tho' they may have the appearance of being applicable to another. Therefore I could not help saying of him, "Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel the Saviour." †

9. The people in general do not understand what I mean, when I foretell that the remains of Israel shall resemble those olives and grapes which have remained after the vintage was over. They know not the meaning of those songs of joy, which I have heard from the uttermost parts of the earth. And they are ignorant of the misfortune brought upon them, when the glory of the righteous is known to the Gentiles, whilst his name is dishonoured in Judea. The event will bring to light what I have been obliged to mention in dark and enigmatical expressions.

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10. But

* My leanness, my leanness, wo unto me,

† Isaiah xlv. 15

10. But what I lament * is, that when this remnant of Israel have been separated from the rest of the nation, it shall remain full of unrighteous persons, who shall act contrary to the divine laws, and they shall then become the objects of God's wrath.

We need only read the first chapters of the acts of the apostles, in order to perceive how exactly all the parts of this prophecy have been accomplished.

1. A small number of disciples, of no fame, no fortune, no learning, and no protection, continued faithful to Christ, and became testimonies of his resurrection; in opposition to a general combination of all who were invested with power and authority among the Jews.

2. The holiness and virtue of their lives was surprising. They had no estate or inheritance. They were all as if it were but one heart and one soul; and that valuable remnant of Israel overflowed with righteousness.

3. All sort of threats and menaces were made use of to silence the disciples of Jesus Christ, but they were all ineffectual. They declared that it was their duty to obey God rather than man, and that it was not in their power to refuse to publish the resurrection of Christ, because they were chosen on purpose to be evidences of this great truth.

4. They preached it first in Judea and Samaria, then they passed over into other nations, and in a few years the extremities of the earth resounded with the glory and praises of the holy one.

5. In proportion as the success of their preaching proved greater among the Gentiles, so did the number of believers decrease amongst the Jews.

6. In short, the unbelief amongst that people proved universal, and there remained only a few, and these such as Isaiah describes.

7. Thus these punishments which the prophet had foreseen, came in a whole crowd upon them; and it shall not be till the latter days that the other remains of

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Gentile

Israel, preserved by divine grace, shall return from their blind ignorance, and adore him * whom their forefathers have crucified.

If we compare what the prophets have foretold concerning the remnant of Israel at the time of the Messiah, with what the new testament informs us relating to the remnant in the time of Christ, it will appear how exactly the event has in every particular agreed with the prophecy, and consequently that Jesus Christ is the Messiah.

Had there been none of the Jews who became Christ's disciples, or had they not been remarkable for their virtue; had they been intimidated, or struck silent; had they only preached up the glory of Christ amongst their own people; had their labours met with no success amongst the Gentiles; or had they confined themselves to any particular people; if after their separation from the rest of the Jews, there had been amongst that people a number who had become disciples; had the greatest part of the chief rulers, and of the people, declared in favour of Christ; had the public authority, and other human means, conspired at first to lay the foundation of his church; had things happened in this manner, then we must have doubted of his being the Messiah, because the prophets have distinguished his disciples by marks quite opposite to these.

But since all they have said of them, so improbable, so difficult to be connected, and so inconceivable to human wisdom, has yet been fully perfected in the disciples of Christ; how can we make the least hesitation to acknowledge him? how can we refuse to offer up the tribute of praise and thanksgiving which are due to the most High, who by the remains of Israel has given us so clear a manifestation of the Saviour of Israel and the Gentiles?

C H A P.

* Zachar. xii. 10.

C H A P. XIX.

A mixture of clear and obscure expressions in the prophecies relating to the kingdom of the Messiah. It was necessary to promise such a prince as the people wished for, and such as the righteous might know. What inclined the people to hope for him, was the thing which hindered them from knowing him. A Messiah, such as the Jews hope for, is both useless and dangerous. The fiction of two Messiahs.

A R T. I.

A mixture of clear and obscure expressions in the prophecies relating to the kingdom of the Messiah.

WHEN the promise of the Messiah was confined to the house of David, God began to reveal in a more clear manner that he should be a king, and that his kingdom should be everlasting *. And since that time the prophets have spoken of him as a king to whom all was to become subject, who should heap riches and glory on Israel, and rescue them from slavery; who was to bring all their enemies under subjection, and to whom all princes should bend as to their sovereign.

It was of the highest importance that the Jews should preserve their hope of the Messiah, that they should expect him with the greatest impatience, and should look upon him as their deliverer from all their calamities.

The design of God in shutting up the Jews within the compass of the law, † was by this means to keep up the remembrance of the promise of the Messiah, and to render their expectations more lively and universal.

Had the prophets made use of no ambiguity, but clearly foretold him such as he was to be; had they not

disguised

* 2. Sam. vii. 12, 13.

† Galat. ii. 23.

disguised his real greatness under figurative expressions ; then the carnal Jews, who were by far the greatest number, would have but little concerned themselves with the promises or the Messiah.

On the other hand, had the prophets mentioned him in a manner different from what he was to be, had they disguised him under the outward pomp of an earthly prince, in such a manner that the righteous could not have known their true Saviour, the scriptures would have then administered no consolation. Nay the prophets themselves would then have found nothing to nourish their faith, or keep alive their hope ; and might have run the risk, of either forgetting the Messiah, or allowing the people to slacken or grow cool in their expectations.

A R T. II.

It was necessary to promise such a prince as the people wished for, and such as the righteous might know.

IT was necessary to promise such a prince as the people wished for, and such as the people might know. Hence comes that mixture of light and obscurity. The prophets speak the truth, but they cover it ; yet the veil with which it is covered, is of such a nature, that it may be seen through : the truth is allowed to shine thro' it, and the veil is rich and valuable, in proportion to what is concealed under it. By this means they have attracted the attention of all : those of enlightened understandings have regarded what is most important, tho' lying hidden ; while the generality of people have been dazzled with outward splendor, and have neglected what was more solid.

Before the coming of the Messiah, all seemed to be bent upon the same object ; the desires of all seemed to terminate at the same point. For they all expected that prince who is promised in scripture ; nor did they trouble themselves much to distinguish whether it was really himself, or only his pomp, which they so earnestly expected

pected; or whether it was faith, or vain desire, which made them wish for his arrival with so much ardor.

A R T. III.

What inclined that people to hope for him, was the thing which hindered them from knowing him.

BUT when the Messiah made his appearance, those very circumstances which prompted them to expect him with so much eagerness, hindered them from knowing him. That veil, which they had not as yet seen thro', still obstructed their sight. They had all along been, and still continued to be strangers to the truth. They had never joined the figure and the reality, the external appearance, and the internal perfections of the Messiah. The figure and external appearance engrossed their attention, and seduced their judgments. Being thus captivated with exterior shew, they but little regarded a Messiah without a crown, and unadorned with regal pageantry, and looked upon him in no other light than that of a common ordinary man.

The righteous, on the other hand, knew him more easily when he was thus represented without pomp or ceremony, because their affections were not set upon the outward appearance that he should make, but on himself alone; they did not expect that he would be attended with a glory, such as is apt to dazzle the sight of mortals, but that he would bring along with him righteousness and salvation.

But of these righteous, there have been but a very small number; the rest have been deceived, and the promises have been fulfilled. The Messiah so high above them, and so much elevated above their expectations, has appeared inconsiderable in their eyes. The Messiah whom they expected is greatly inferior to him who is really come, and because they have received one infinitely beyond all their expectations, they imagine they have received none at all.

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A R T. IV.

A Messiah, such as the Jews hope for, both useless and dangerous.

THEY pleased themselves with the thoughts of the Messiah's not only rendering them independent of all foreign princes *, but likewise imagined that he would bring all under their subjection, and make all nations tributary to them, that he should make them overflow with riches, that gold and silver should be more plentiful amongst them than it was at the time of Solomon. † That Jerusalem should become the greatest and most magnificent city in the world; that there should numbers of people come from all nations, who should be glad to become servants to the Jews, and esteem themselves highly honoured, were they but admitted into their meanest employments; in short, that the very least of the house of Israel should be universally respected, nay, almost adored. These ideas they had formed to themselves, from passages in the scriptures which they had not understood; their pride, and their love of temporal things, had so far blinded them, that they were not able to discover the true sense of these passages.

But had the Messiah been such an one as they expected, I cannot see wherein he would have contributed to the real good of mankind; nor can I conceive why the holy prophets should wish for his coming with so much ardor.

As for my own part, did I view him in the same light which they do, I should then be quite indifferent as to his reign, because I have nothing to hope from him. I have nothing to ask of a prince, such as they represent him to be. Gold and silver is not what I desire, nor have I any occasion for a number of servants. A magnificent city situated in a country where I am but an exile, can only make me forget my native country.

High

* Isa. xiv. 2.

† Isa. lx. 9, 10, 14, 16, 17. Isa. lxi. 5, 6. Isa. liv. 11, 12. Isa. xiv. 2. Zech. viii. 23.

High respect and honour could give me no real satisfaction, it would only serve to feed my pride.

The Messiah expected by the Jews, proposes to me nothing but what serves to nourish my corruption. He raises my desires to the highest pitch, and instead of acting as a physician to cure them, he becomes as it were an instrument whereby I may have them satisfied. He knows neither my distempers, nor their remedies. He is quite unacquainted with what I stand in need of, and with what I have lost. He substitutes outward goods in place of others which he is not able to give, and of which I am so much desirous. He presses me to alter my choice, he tempts me, and endeavours to gain upon me by his outward blessings; but I dread him as a deceiver, and I shun him. And so far am I from putting all my confidence in him, that I look upon him as one who is in league with the enemies of my righteousness and liberty.

Besides, what example could such a Saviour as this afford me? What comfort could he give me in affliction, or what courage could he inspire me with, when under persecution? or how could he teach me to despise all enjoyments, when separated from virtue and goodness?

A R T. V.

The fiction of two Messiahs.

IF the Messiah had been to come with riches in his hands, and plenty attending him; had he been to be distinguished by magnificence; how could the prophets have foretold that he should be rejected by the body of the people in general, and that an universal blindness should conceal him from those who had so long expected him? * How could they have said of him, that he should be looked upon as the meanest of men, as a leper, as a criminal pursued by divine justice?

Must we then divide the Messiah, and make two, and give to the one glory and authority, and to the other, humility and weakness?

But

* Isa. liii.

But which of these two is it who has been promised to Abraham, as being the fountain of happiness to all nations? Shall they come at different times, or both at the same time? Shall they be joined together, or shall they be opposite in their interests? Shall we be allowed to reject the one and prefer the other? What shall we receive from him who is in a state of sorrow and humiliation? If we receive righteousness and innocence, then the office of the other will become superfluous, and even dangerous: and if we do not obtain righteousness and innocence by the humble and suffering Messiah, what end did he answer by coming into the world, and undergoing misery, that was of no use?

It is plain, that the Jews do not understand the scriptures, since they find such contradictions, and are at a loss how to apply to one Messiah, what was surely meant of one. But this ridiculous whim of dividing him into two, is intolerable; and it seems to be rather a sort of frenzy, proceeding from a distracted brain, than any thing that deserves a serious consideration.

C H A P. XX.

Proofs brought to shew that Christ is the Messiah, by the exact conformity of his kingdom with what the prophets have said concerning that of the Messiah. 1. His kingdom without riches, without human means to support it. 2. Everlasting. 3. Without that pomp and magnificence which other princes have. 4. A kingdom of grace and holiness. 5. Inward and invisible. 6. A kingdom which is founded upon that contempt, which the subjects of the Messiah shall shew towards gold and riches. 7. A kingdom which has nothing in common with those of wicked princes. 8. Full of peace, and unadorned with foreign conquests. 9. It extendeth over all nations. 10. It consists in rendering the princes of the earth open to receive instruction. 11. A kingdom that will be perfected when the Messiah shall be seated at the right hand of God. 12. The truth of the scriptures.

IF the Messiah was to be accompanied with poverty and affliction, as the prophets have foretold, then the Jews must be greatly mistaken in the notions which they have formed of his grandeur and glory. They know nothing of him, since they are unacquainted with the condition wherein he was to be. They are equally mistaken as to the victorious conquests which they imagine he was to obtain, as they are ignorant of the ignominious treatment which he was to suffer; and 'tis a meer phantom which they expect, instead of the true Messiah whom the scriptures promise.

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First proof. The prophets have foretold that the kingdom of the Messiah shall be without riches, and without human means to support it.

THE promise of a Messiah without riches is no where more clearly expressed, than in this famous prophecy of Zechariah, where the Holy Spirit speaks without a veil, and without allegory. " Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion? * shout O daughter of Jerusalem: behold thy king cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation, lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass. I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle-bow shall be cut off; and he shall speak peace unto the heathen: and his dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth. As for thee also, by the blood of thy covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit, wherein is no water".

This king, who, when he comes, is to make Jerusalem rejoice, is surely him whom they expect: but yet this king is represented poor and lowly, and riding upon an ass; this is all his magnificence.

Nor can it be said here, that we must expect another who shall reign with more glory: since it is this very king, so poor and so lowly, who shall extend his dominion from one corner of the earth to the other; 'tis expressly to him that all shall be subjected.

These two circumstances, in appearance so opposite to one another, are nevertheless united to him. He is king over all, yet possesses nothing; that is, he is not such as our earthly princes are; he is righteous, he is a Saviour. In this sense, he is abundantly rich, and in vain do the Jews look for another sort of grandeur.

Let them consider the following passage; " I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem": and will they still maintain that the Mes-

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* Zechar. ix. 9. 10.

Messiah is to be ushered into the world with a numerous retinue, and a formidable appearance? They are greatly mistaken. After this manner have the kings of Israel and Judea reigned: but the new prince shall make use of no such means to establish his power. He stands not in need of them. He himself is greatness and strength; and poor as he is, he will nevertheless bring all the earth under his subjection.

He shall triumph over all human power, he shall bring down the most lofty empires, and all this shall be done without the force of war to put it in execution. Hitherto the Jews are greatly mistaken; they have represented in their own minds battles and victories: but the Messiah breaks the battle-bows and darts; he comes without arms, and speaks peace unto all.

He offers this blessing, not to the Jews alone, but unto all nations; so that this vain hope which the Jews entertained of all nations being brought under their subjection, appears to be absurd and groundless; for since all is to be in a state of peace, how can there be so many who are to be brought under their subjection, or made tributary to them?

There is indeed one part of the prophecy which regards Israel in particular: her captives shall be set at liberty. But what captives, and from what prison shall they be delivered? From a pit under ground and without water; 'tis not from the dominion of other princes that they shall be delivered. This consideration removes another illusion, by which the Jews are misled.

But by what means shall these prisons under ground be opened? By the merit of that blood which shall seal the new covenant; for the blood of animals which has sealed the old one has no more power.

It is necessary then that the liberty of the first righteous be bought by the blood of the Messiah, since he himself is the Saviour and the righteous one. What then will become of all those vain-glorious thoughts with which the Jews are puffed up in regard to the Messiah, since the true one is to be sacrificed as a victim, and consequently unknown to those who sacrificed him?

This

This prophecy by itself is sufficient to unveil the whole scriptures, and to dispel all that false grandeur which the Jews attribute to the Messiah, and which hinders them from perceiving the righteous one, and the Saviour, whose power is of such a nature, that he has no occasion to make use of those means which are necessary to aggrandize other princes; and who never makes his poverty and seeming weakness the instruments of bringing all kingdoms under his subjection.

A R T. II.

SECOND PROOF.

His kingdom everlasting.

THE kingdom of Jesus Christ, and the manner in which it is foretold in the scriptures, claim an exact and extensive inquiry.

When God promises a Messiah to David, he tells him * that his kingdom shall be everlasting. Thus all the prophets, especially Isaiah, speak of him: the extent of his dominions shall be without bounds, and peace shall have no end; † “Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment, and with justice, from henceforth, even for ever: the zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.”

This promise alone plainly discovers to us that the kingdom of the Messiah is not a temporal one, and has nothing in it like to that of other princes. Since it is to last for ever, it cannot be of this world; 'tis not for this that the Messiah has reigned, he has reigned to make his followers compleatly happy; and what happiness would this procure to them, if, while the kingdom of their prince was everlasting, they themselves were subject to death? This would rather have been a punishment, first to have had the power of knowing him,

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* 2 Sam. vii. 31.

† Isa. ix. 7. 1 Chron. xxii. 10.

him, and soon after to lose him irretrievably. Those who have an affection for him must be allowed to have him always for their master. They themselves must be eternal, and consequently must expect a future life.

A R T. III.

THIRD PROOF.

His kingdom is to be without that pomp and magnificence which other princes have.

According to the representation which the Holy Spirit has given us of the Messiah's reign, he is not in any thing to resemble other princes. He is to be without pomp, without retinue, and without all outward marks of power: he is not even to command with an air of authority. His voice is scarcely to be heard without. No edicts are to be issued forth in his name: no person is to be punished by his laws, nor are the public magistrates to support him with their assistance. * "He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the streets. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench." Such expressions as these intirely remove all ideas that may be formed of a royal power; and they ought to set all those right who blindly confound the Messiah with a temporal prince.

* Isa. xlii. 2, 3.

A R T. IV.

FOURTH PROOF.

A kingdom of grace and holiness.

THE more expressive the scriptures are upon this point, the more they serve to convince us that his kingdom extends over the heart and over the will; and that it is the same as that of mercy and grace. "The

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"The spirit of the Lord God is upon me *, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek, he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound: to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God: to comfort all that mourn: to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise, for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified."

Jesus Christ having read this prophecy in the synagogue of Nazareth, he declared that it was accomplished in his person †, and it is almost impossible not to see the truth of this in every circumstance. Behold the Messiah whom I stand in need of! Behold him whom the prophets have promised! He comes to comfort the afflicted; not to increase their afflictions by amusing them with the expectation of false happiness, and making them forget what is their true and solid blessing. He does not come as a support to vanity and pride; but to add fresh courage to the meek in heart. He comes to rescue those who groan under the tyranny of their passions, and has no intention to heighten their thralldom, by fixing their minds on sensual and corporeal things. I stand in need of light and strength; he is the fountain of both: I cannot help being filled with horror and dread when I consider the number of my iniquities; he relieves me from this apprehension, by proclaiming to me a pardon: I am in a state of banishment from heaven; he opens the gates to receive me: in this particular I am greatly distressed, that when good dispositions strongly incline me to the pursuit of virtue, they are opposed and combated by contrary passions; he delivers me from these inward broils, and makes righteousness prevail within me, and his grace triumphs over all. He perfectly understands my condition,

* Isa. lxi. 1, 2, 3.

† This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears. Luke iv. 21.

tion, and is no stranger to any of my wants or infirmities, and he knows whence all my grief or sorrow is derived: he has every thing which I stand in need of, and all that I can wish for, I find in him; I give myself intirely up to him, whilst the Jews, being misled by delusion and falshood, choose rather to follow a mere phantom which their own vanity has framed.

Could we suppose the least degree of obscurity to be contained in these expressions of the prophet, yet surely we must allow it to be intirely removed by the interpretation which he himself subjoins, when he says, That there shall be in Zion men who will abound in righteousness, they shall be trees planted by the Lord, and by them shall he be glorified. Righteousness and holiness may be figured or represented by temporal goods; but these can never be represented by holiness. Spiritual liberty may be conceived under that of the body; but a deliverance from a real prison can never be understood under the promise of spiritual liberty. The greater is never the type of the less. A great and high promise is not explained by one of an inferior nature. Thus when the scriptures mingle expressions, which will admit of two meanings, with others which are plain, and denote spiritual and invisible goods, it determines the signification of the rest, and so makes it impossible for us to be deceived.

Those meant in this prophecy, who are to excell in righteousness in Jerusalem, and to be as a model to direct the righteous, are the apostles, the disciples of Jesus Christ, and those who first embraced the christian faith, who sold and forsook all, in order to mind religion alone, and rest satisfied with the expectation of eternal blessings. 'Tis them too whom the Holy Spirit means in the following words: "And strangers shall stand and feed your flocks", and the sons of the "alien shall be your plowmen and your vine-dressers. But ye shall be named the priests of the Lord: men shall call you the ministers of our God."

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* Isa. lxi. 5, 6.

This promise has been fulfilled in every particular. We may see how the primitive christians at Jerusalem hardly ever quitted the temple, and wholly employed themselves in giving praise and thanksgiving to God * : while at the same time we find that the churches of the Gentiles thought themselves obliged to support that of Jerusalem, from a grateful acknowledgement of their having first received from them the light of salvation ; and out of their abundance to supply the wants of those saints who had renounced all for the sake of Christ.

A R T. V.

FIFTH PROOF.

A kingdom which is inward and invisible.

SINCE it is certain that the kingdom of the Messiah is a kingdom of grace and holiness, it is no less evident at the same time that it is inward and invisible ; and that what the Jews have imagined to signify outward magnificence, according to the letter of the promises, must be understood in a spiritual sense, and by this means become more magnificent than what they have expected. We see a glorious instance of this in the building of a new Jerusalem, which is the great work of the Messiah. " Behold, saith the Lord †, I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires. And I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones. And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children. In righteousness shalt thou be established."

It

* Acts. ii. 44, 45. 2 Cor. ix. 12.

We may see what was the care of St. Paul and the churches of the Gentiles, for the faithful of Jerusalem, if we look into the first epistle to the Corinthians, c. xvi.

And in the second, c. viii. and ix.

In the epistle to the Galatians. c. ii. 10.

† Isa. liv. 11, 12, 13, 14.

It is plain, that by this Jerusalem is meant the christian church, and that those precious stones of which it is to be built, are the children of that church. But who are these children? They are those who have been instructed by God himself, established upon a rock of righteousness, and filled with that peace, which is intirely derived from the power and influence of the divine spirit. After such an explanation as this, we must indeed be deaf to all reason, if we are still at a loss to know the true meaning of these sapphires and agates; and it would be the highest absurdity in us, to look for a city adorned with outward greatness and magnificence.

And if this absurdity of the Jews with regard to Jerusalem is so glaring, it is still more so with respect to the Messiah. For, since his work is only magnificent in a spiritual sense, how can they imagine that he himself is to be set off with external grandeur and magnificence?

The law was given by Moses *, but grace and truth is the work of Jesus Christ. That law, which required a slavish obedience, was published in the midst of thunder and lightening: but the new law is declared without noise or shew. The more the outward lustre that attended the first was, the less it had of inward power: and the more internal the second was, the less it was accompanied with external shew, to strike the senses. It is not directed to the eyes or ears, but it speaks to the heart. This new law-giver, like the law which he gives, has nothing in his person to please and flatter the senses: 'tis to the heart alone that he addresses himself.

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* John i. 17.

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A R T. VI.

SIXTH PROOF.

A kingdom which is founded upon that contempt, which the subjects of the Messiah shall shew towards gold and riches.

IT is manifest then, that instead of amusing ourselves with the fantastical hope of the Messiah's making Jerusalem overflow with gold and riches, we must expect that he will make this city abound with righteous men, who will undervalue riches. 'Tis thus he explains himself, and discovers the foundation of his promises, which are concealed and wrapt up under others less worthy of him*. "For brass I will bring gold, "and for iron I will bring silver, and for wood brass, "and for stones iron." By these words the Jews understand a second Solomon: they are greatly mistaken; and unhappy is it for them to be so in such a material point as this!

Here he means a building that is to be spiritual, eternal, unchangeable; where all is to be holy, strong, and incorruptible, a city full of holiness and perfection. † "Thy people also shall be all righteous; they shall "inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, "the work of my hands, that I may be glorified."

Behold what is worthy of a Messiah, and what can only be applied to him! He is king over the righteous, for 'tis he has made them such; he has justified them for his own glory, and his kingdom consists wholly of them; this kingdom is his own conquest, for they are the work of his hands. Nothing but the most perfect holiness and righteousness is proper to the Messiah; and we sink the real dignity of his character greatly, when we consider him as a king abounding in riches, which any wicked earthly prince may have as well as he.

A R T.

* Isa. lx. 17.

† Isa. lx. 21.

A R T. VII.
SEVENTH PROOF.

A kingdom which has nothing in common with those of wicked princes.

THE Holy Spirit has given us a most excellent representation of the Messiah, of his perfections and his ministry? and there is not one particular mentioned which can be common to wicked princes; his holiness and righteousness alone are taken notice of; this ought to remove from our minds all ideas which we may form of an exterior grandeur and magnificence.

“And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse*, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. “And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord: and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord; and he shall not judge after the sight of the eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears. But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth. And he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins.”

Every part of this prophecy deserves to be particularly considered, but I shall confine myself to one thing only; which is to make it appear, that the Spirit of God designed here to inspire us with an idea of the Messiah quite different from that of all other princes; and to inform us, that he was to have no armies, no magistrates, no officers; and that he was to reign by himself without any aid or assistance; nor was he to be attended with grandeur or retinue, to render him conspicuous to the eyes of mankind.

In

* Isa. xi. 1, 3, 4, 5.

In the first place, he was to spring from the house of Jesse, from the roots, that is, when this house shall have lost the sceptre, and shall have fallen into obscurity.

Secondly, he shall be filled with the Spirit of the Lord, he shall be fraught with wisdom, knowledge, and the fear of God. He shall be distinguished by a grandeur that's inward and invisible, but he shall have nothing of outward pomp to raise him above the degree of other men.

Thirdly, he shall not judge of what he sees by the eyes of the body, nor shall he hear with corporeal ears; that is, he shall search into the bottom of our hearts, and there he will read our most secret thoughts.

He shall not make use of the assistance of judges, who can only inform him of what passes without; he shall not have a public tribunal, nor any court of judicatory, such as princes generally have, where they administer justice to their people.

Fourthly, he shall have no occasion for any method to bring all under his subjection, but the power and influence of his word.

He shall not stand in need of armies, nor servants, nor officers, to bring rebellious subjects to their duty, to keep them in obedience, or to extend his conquests.

Fifthly, with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.

He shall not then be attended with an useless croud of persons who receive all from him, and can supply him with nothing.

If he adopts a few disciples, he chuses such as are poor, and raises them from the most obscure condition, lest if he had fixed upon greater men, it might look as if he stood in need of them. He shares with them his power over the wicked, so that the words of their mouths become able to put the wicked to flight, and this power they derive from their heavenly master.

Sixthly, righteousness and faithfulness always remain in his promises. These are his arms, and they become swords in his hands.

It is then as unnecessary to give him assistance to support his kingdom, as it would be to aid him in being righteous and faithful. Such a king as this is over all, because he stands upon his own proper foundation. It would be to abase him, and bring him on a level with earthly princes, to suppose him surrounded with a croud of useless attendants, who instead of raising his dignity, would lessen it greatly, and instead of contributing to his glory, would very much conceal his superior excellence.

A R T. VIII.

EIGHTH PROOF.

A kingdom that is to be full of peace, and without outward victories.

WE have already seen more than once that his kingdom shall be full of peace, and that for this reason it is represented by that of Solomon. "Isaiah" calls him the prince of peace,* and he affirms, that "of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end."

What then shall become of all those victories, which the Jews by hoping so much for, have made as it were a veil to hinder them from seeing Christ? Where shall all those princes be that are to be humbled before the people of Jerusalem, loaded with chains, and led in triumph into Jerusalem?

Is it not strange then, that the Jews should still continue in their error, notwithstanding they have so often read that the kingdom of the Messiah shall be a peaceful one? Are not temporal peace and war, according to the ideas they form of them, quite opposite to each other? and one would think it might be very easy for them to conceive, that the victories of the Messiah are to be taken in a spiritual sense, since these only can agree with universal peace.

A R T.

* Isa. ix. 6, 7. 1 Chron. xxii. 9.

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A R T. IX.

NINTH PROOF.

A kingdom that extendeth its power over all nations.

BUT that we may leave the Jews no excuse for their error in this point, let us ask them against whom shall the Messiah declare war? Against the heathen nations, they will answer. But if we give any credit to the prophets, "'tis to the heathen that he shall speak "peace."* He must be a light to them as well as to Israel. This is expressly the design of his mission. "It "is a light thing, saith the Lord, that thou shouldest be "my servant, to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to "restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee "for a light to the Gentiles, † that thou mayest be my "salvation unto the end of the earth." It shall not be in vain that he invites all nations to come unto him; for they shall come to him in great numbers, with the spirit of religion and true repentance upon them. "There "shall be a root of Jesse (that is, the Messiah ‡) which "shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the "Gentiles seek, and his rest shall be glorious."

It seems here necessary to put the Jews in mind, that it is they themselves who are to continue infidels, whilst the Gentiles shall embrace Christ; so that if the Messiah is to declare war against his rebellious subjects, it must be against the Jewish nation itself. Let it suffice at present to lay before them the words of Moses himself, in whom they put so much confidence. "They have "moved me to jealousy, || saith the Lord, with that "which is not God, they have provoked me to anger "with their vanities, and I will move them to jealousy "with those which are not a people (belonging to me)." The Gentiles then are preferred, and consequently the Jews cannot justly triumph over their humiliation.

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* Zech. ix. 10.

† Isa. xlii. 6.

‡ Isa. xi. 10.

|| He shall sprinkle many nations. Isa. lii. 15,
Deut. xxxii. 21.

But is it not written, say they, that the Messiah shall bring all kings under his subjection? * Certainly the prophets have said so, but then this shall be done by bringing them to the belief of the true faith.

A R T. X.

TENTH PROOF.

A kingdom that consists in rendering the princes of the earth open to receive instruction.

THE victory which the Messiah shall gain will be an internal one, because it shall be full of truth †. He shall subdue the inclinations of princes, but shall allow them to remain on their thrones. He shall change the inward state of their heart, but their outward condition shall continue to be the same. He shall make them the children of his church, and shall not in the least diminish any thing of their royal dignity. He shall temper their minds, and take away from their authority all haughtiness and pride : he shall make them have the obedience and submission of lambs. And all this shall he do without taking in the least from their regal authority, which he will rather render more holy and venerable.

But, say they, all kings will not be so tractable; there will be some who will oppose the kingdom of the Messiah; and surely, say they, they must be reduced by power, and brought to obedience by force.

A R T.

* Psal. lxxi. 12. Isa. xlix. 23. chap. lx. 10, 12, 16, and chap. lii. 15.

† (This is the true sense of the following figurative expressions, of Isaiah) The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid : and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed, their young ones shall lie down together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. Isa. xi. 6, 7. and chap. lxxv. 25.

The nature of these animals still remains the same, but what is here meant alludes to the change to be wrought on the heart.

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A R T. XI.

ELEVENTH PROOF.

A kingdom that will be perfected, but not until the Messiah shall be seated at the right hand of God.

THE objection mentioned above has truth in it, but not as the Jews understand it. All the enemies of the Messiah shall be broke by a rod of iron, as the prophet expresses it*, they shall be made his footstool; and all the princes who will not submit to his authority, shall perish in the day of wrath.

But when shall this day be? The Jews imagine that it shall be during the time of the visible and temporal kingdom of the Messiah; and here they are greatly mistaken. Before the enemies of the Messiah be made his footstool, he must be seated at the right-hand of God; he must be in heaven, concealed in the bosom of his Father, and invisible to all upon earth. His temporal mission must be ended before he returns to him who sent him. It is necessary too that his patience, in regard to those who have not owned him as their king, should appear to them a proof that he is not the Messiah, since he gives no outward mark of his resentment, until the day which is destined for divine vengeance. At the same time it is requisite that whilst many princes and nations adore him, the unfaithful should appear to be unpunished, and that the Jews, who are more deeply plunged in guilt than the rest, should abuse the long forbearance of him whom they have rejected.

This is the perfect consummation of the kingdom of Jesus Christ, so intirely agreeable to all that the prophets have said concerning the Messiah, that it is almost impossible not to know him by such a conformity. He has appeared poor amongst us, that he might make us rich. He has employed no human means to support his kingdom. He has nothing resembling other kings. He possesses nothing which wicked princes have,

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§ Psal. ii. 9, 12. Psal. cx. 1.

have. He has subjected to himself all earthly princes, and has dethroned none of them. He has joined an eternal peace to perpetual victory. He has entirely reigned by righteousness and holiness. He has raised his own subjects by making them righteous. He has borrowed no outward assistance; he has been king by himself. His holy word has routed the usurper and the wicked one who seduced mankind. He is gone into the bosom of his heavenly Father after having established his church, which is his kingdom. He is now seated at the right hand of the Almighty, and there will he abide until his enemies be made his foot-stool; and with the greatest patience till the last day he bears with the Jews, and the rest of the unfaithful, who abuse his forbearance, by taking it either for want of power, or for a final impunity. But by this perverseness, without knowing it, they give the last mark by which we may discern him whom they have rejected.

A R T. XII.

TWELFTH PROOF.

The truth of the scriptures.

BEFORE we finish this chapter, let us seriously reflect upon what has been already said, and ask our own consciences, whether or not it is possible that human conjecture could foretell a kingdom, so widely different from any thing amongst men, as that of the Messiah was, so mixed with apparent contradictions, and so little resembling all that experience or history has informed us of? Whether any other light but that from God, be able to enlighten the prophets with the knowledge of truths, which, even after they were accomplished, seemed almost incredible? whether any other wisdom but that of the divine Being, could have so guided their expressions, and so cautiously intermingled clearness and obscurity, that an upright heart could perceive the true Messiah, whilst a corrupt one saw nothing

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nothing but the veil which concealed the true meaning? Whether Jesus Christ, whose mission the scriptures so fully establish, does not likewise perfectly confirm the divinity of these writings, by accomplishing and fulfilling the truth of them with the greatest exactness?

CH A P. XXI.

What has contributed most to the blindness of the Jews, ought rather to have enlightened their understanding. The death and ignominious sufferings of Jesus Christ, are convincing proofs, that he is the Messiah, because they have been plainly foretold by the prophets. If he had not been crucified, and his patience had not been looked upon as a want of power, then he could not have been the promised Saviour.

A R T. I.

What contributed most to the blindness of the Jews, ought rather to have enlightened their understanding.

Nothing contributed so much to the blindness of the Jews, as the death of the Messiah; yet nothing seemed more capable to enlighten them than the manner in which he suffered it, had they but attentively considered the prophecies which foretold the most particular circumstances of it.

Perhaps at the time when they were putting their hands to the accomplishment of this awful mystery, they might have been mistaken; but after they had time to reflect on what they had done, and to compare it with what had been prophesied, after they had seen all the consequences of a sacrifice offered up both by Cain and Abraham, it is astonishing that they did not discern in Jesus Christ the truth, as it was figured by Abel and Isaac.

The cross of our Saviour is still a stumbling block to the Jews, as it was formerly foolishness to the Gentiles.

tiles*. The whole world prostrated before this cross, idolatry destroyed by it, the wisdom and power of God manifested for so many ages by this cross, are things which have not been able to make them consider the wickedness of their forefathers. As for us who know the strength and wisdom of God to those who are called, whether they be Jews or Gentiles; we make it our glory to proclaim his, and are so far from being ashamed of Christ, that we openly acknowledge him to be our Saviour; since the prophets have expressly forbid us to receive any other Messiah than him who shall suffer a painful and ignominious death for us.

A R T. II.

The death and ignominious sufferings of the Messiah clearly foretold by the prophet Isaiah.

THE prophet Isaiah being entrusted to declare this truth, several ages before it happened, begins with foretelling how little probability such a mystery would seem to have amongst mankind. "Who hath believed, saith he, our report †?" that is, who will believe me, O Lord, when I publish what thou hast ordered me to make known; "And to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" that is, of him, by whom mankind is to be saved?

The prophet goes on thus: "He shall grow up before him as a tender plant ‡, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form or comeliness: and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him, he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

"Surely he hath born our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God,

* 1 Cor. i. 23, 24.

† Isa. liii. 1.

‡ Isa. liii. 2, 3, &c.

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"God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our
"transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the
"chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with
"his stripes we are healed.

"All we like lost sheep have gone astray: we have
"turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath
"laid on him the iniquity of us all.

"He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he o-
"pened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the
"slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb,
"so he openeth not his mouth.

"He was taken from prison and from judgment: and
"who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off
"out of the land of the living, for the transgression of
"my people was he stricken.

"And he made his grave with the wicked, and with
"the rich in his death; because he had done no vio-
"lence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it
"pleased the Lord to bruise him, he has put him to
"grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for
"sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days,
"and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.
"He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be
"satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous ser-
"vant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.

"Therefore will I divide him a portion with the
"great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong:
"because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and
"he was numbered with the transgressors, and he bare
"the sin of many, and made intercession for the trans-
"gressors."

The prophet here certainly speaks of the Messiah,
since the antient Jews could not but agree in this. But
by an attempt which becomes a testimony of the truth,
they have boldly presumed to put a false and opposite
construction upon all those prophecies which foretell the
low condition and sufferings of the Messiah, without
daring to make any alteration in the text of Isaiah; tho'
that text being quite contrary to their comment, was a
strong proof of their want of faith, and their wilful
blindness. The Jews of latter days have still less can-
dour,

dour, and what their fathers have understood concerning the Messiah, they have wrested and applied to Jeremiah; but in this they have only shewn an impotent hatred against Christ and his prophets; for all the proofs which possibly can be given, concur to convince us, that it is him of whom Isaiah speaks. I shall consider them a little, and for this reason I shall go back to the preceding chapter.

There the prophet promises to Jerusalem glory, liberty, holiness, and the accomplishment of their wishes; and he goes on thus: "My people shall know my name, therefore they shall know in that day that I am he that doth speak, behold it is I*." Can there be any prediction more clear than this, with regard to the Messiah? The prophets have proclaimed him, he spoke by them, and here as it were you behold him in person. "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace, that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation, that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth! thy watchmen shall lift up the voice, with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion. Break forth into joy, sing together ye waste places of Jerusalem: for the Lord hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem."

The king who has been promised and looked for, has already taken possession of his kingdom. The news has been spread every where. Universal joy has prevailed. Every thing wears a new face in Jerusalem. Those who have been sent to proclaim these good tidings, have declared that with their own eyes they have seen the Saviour of the world.

"The Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God."

This arm which God kept concealed in his bosom, and which he now exposes to the view of all nations, is the same which the prophet speaks of, when he says, "To whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" To

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* Isaiah. lii. 6, &c.

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* Isaiah

whom is he known, or who is he? this is the same as the Messiah, and consequently he is directly meant in the verses that follow.

But that I may represent this affair in the strongest light of evidence, I need only produce what is said in the 51st chapter of Isaiah: "Hearken unto me, * my people, and give ear unto me, O my nation: for a law shall proceed from me, and I will make my judgment to rest for a light of the people. My righteousness is near: my salvation is gone forth; and mine arms shall judge the people: the isles shall wait upon me, and upon mine arm shall they trust." If ever there was a clear prophecy of the Messiah, surely this is one, where the arm of God, righteousness, and the salvation which he is to send, all mean one and the same thing.

I come now to the last part of what the prophet says: "My servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted, and extolled, and be very high."

Who else but the Messiah can be this servant of God, who is to be so much exalted and extolled? 'Tis him too of whom it hath been said, "He reigneth, and hath redeemed Jerusalem." 'Tis his coming that is proclaimed by all those who bring the glad tidings of peace and reconciliation with God.

"As many were astonished at thee on account of thy desolations, so his visage was marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men."

It is to Jerusalem that Isaiah speaks. You are the city, says he, which God has chosen, and has preferred to all the rest of the world; and he has established in you the only temple which he would have; yet notwithstanding all this, he has allowed you and the temple to be destroyed; he has reduced you to so low a state, that you have been no longer acknowledged to be the holy city; and all have looked upon you to be forever rejected from the divine favour.

Thus shall it be with your king and deliverer. He shall be in a state of humiliation and disgrace, notwithstanding what we have already said, that he shall be exalted

* Isaiah. li. 4, 5.

exalted and extolled. We must take particular notice of the different times. He shall begin first by suffering ignominy, and afterwards he shall be rewarded with eternal glory. As to outward appearance, he shall be humbled below all men: but the time will come, when he shall be infinitely exalted above all mankind.

“So shall he sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him: for that which had not been told them, shall they see; and that which they had not heard, shall they consider.”

By his humiliation and suffering he shall purchase salvation to all mankind, he shall purify them by the sprinkling of his blood. The greatest princes of the earth shall be struck with terror, and filled with veneration, when they behold him humbled upon their account. And they will believe in his resurrection and his glory, when proclaimed unto them, tho’ they have not had the advantage of the prophets to prepare their minds and foretell the truth.

But, Lord, who amongst them shall believe in the Messiah, who has been so long promised to them, when we shall reveal him unto them*? Who amongst them shall have light enough to discern thy powerful arm, when they see him weakened for our sake? For instead of such a king as they expect, who is to rise up adorned with outward glory, and to be in possession of the throne of David, he shall be as a tender plant†, really born of a virgin full of grace, tho’ immersed in poverty and obscurity, and mixed with the lower class of mankind.

Here I must stop, and ask whether or not it is possible to wrest the meaning of what has been taken notice of from the 52d chapter of Isaiah, to any other than the Messiah? or whether we can affix any other sense to what is said in the 53d chapter? Nay there is so much clearness and evidence in what has been said in the 52d chapter, that it will be much easier to deny there has been any promise at all made of a Messiah, than

* Who hath believed our report?

† He shall grow up as a root out of a dry ground. Isa. liii. 2

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to throw an air of obscurity upon what is written in that chapter. Besides too, it is evident that the prophet has the same meaning in both these chapters, so that we cannot find out the least difference: for the last verses of the 52d are an abbreviation of what is contained in the 53d chapter, which is only a more full and ample explication.

But setting aside this proof, which carries demonstration along with it, we need only read the 53d chapter, and we shall find there still a great number of proofs.

1. He, of whom the prophet speaks, has atoned for the sins of men by his sufferings. By his sorrows has he merited their reconciliation with God. He has healed them by his wounds.

2. The prophets themselves, and consequently the most righteous of men, reckon themselves amongst the number of those who stand in need of being purified by him.

3. He offers himself as a sacrifice, and he actually suffers death for the sins of all. He is the victim which God has chosen, and this holy sacrifice is sufficient to appease the divine wrath.

4. His death is recompenced by a numerous and everlasting posterity.

5. The conversion of the wicked, and the great, is the price of his death and burial.

6. He has the nations of the earth for his inheritance, because he has voluntarily given himself as a sacrifice: by laying down his life, he has triumphed over the strong, and divided their spoil.

If this is not the Messiah, and if we can ascribe those great works to any other than him; what will he do who equals them when he shall come? To place our hope in him, would be useless. He will find the world already purified, when he shall come. He shall have no occasion to bring about our reconciliation; this great work is already done. He shall not triumph over the strong; they are already vanquished. We cannot be restored to health by his care; another physician has already cured us. A second sacrifice is unnecessary; a second priest-

hood is of no service. All that this deliverer can pretend to, is already done.

It greatly redounds to the glory of thy Son, O God! that he has no enemies, but such as are likewise enemies to reason. And it is matter of great comfort to us, to behold in thy prophets so exact a prediction of what we read in the gospel, and to discern by every mark in Isaiah, the Lamb who takes away the sins of the world, and who has washed us in his blood!

But if we should for a moment draw the veil over him, yet it is certain at least that the Messiah shall suffer, that he shall die; that he shall be put to death by that very people who expect him, but shall not know him; that the silence which God shall observe during his sacrifice, will make them look upon him as rejected by God, and as one who has usurped the office and name of the Messiah; that his long-suffering, tho' free and voluntary, shall be despised, and esteemed as a proof of his want of power; that, when he is given up as a sacrifice, he shall be disgraced, and accompanied by the most vile criminals, whom they shall join with him to be punished; that they shall bind him as the most guilty wretch, and declare him to be such by a public decree. That he, on the other hand, so far from vindicating himself, or working his deliverance by miracles, shall remain as mute as a lamb which is about to be sacrificed. That they shall not be undeceived until his resurrection, and the surprizing increase of his people, which shall be a strong proof of it. That they shall still farther perceive their error, when they see all nations with their princes forsaking their false deities, and falling down to him. That they shall at last discover him, who hitherto appeared so contemptible to them, to be the just and holy one, to be the king promised to Zion, whom a small number of his own received, but the body of the nation in general delivered up to the Gentiles, amongst whom he was exalted and extolled, after the manner of Joseph, who was sold by his brethren, and became a ruler in Egypt.

I need only now remove the curtain, and allow Jesus Christ to make his appearance, of whom we have a most lively

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lively representation in Isaiah : let me then ask this question, Is it possible to find a more perfect agreement betwixt a prophecy and its accomplishment? And if we believe in the prophets, can we refuse giving our credit and belief to what is contained in the New Testament?

C H A P. XXII.

The Messiah was to be put to death, according to the prophecy of Daniel: he was to be fixed to the cross and die upon it, according to the prophecy of David. It is predicted that his patience shall be looked upon as weakness; and his confidence in God, as vanity: it is also predicted, that the Jews shall universally lament him whom they have pierced.

A R T. I.

The Messiah was to be put to death, according to the prophecy of Daniel.

EXcept the name of Messiah, every thing is contained in the description of Isaiah; and all his other names of Righteous, Saviour, and Light of the Gentiles, point him out very clearly.

But Daniel gives him the name of the Messiah in the very place where he predicts that he shall be put to death: “* And after three-score and two weeks shall “Messiah be cut off?” And we cannot distinguish this Christ from another, who shall be the prince or the king promised; for the same prophet, after the example of the angel who reveals the mysteries to him, calls him the Messiah who shall be the prince or the king. “† “From the going forth of the commandment to restore “and to build Jerusalem, unto the Messiah the prince, T 2 “shall

* We must join these 62 weeks with the other seven mentioned by the prophet in the preceding verse. Dan. ix. 26.

† Dan. ix. 25.

"shall be seven weeks; and threescore and two weeks."

Neither can we say that the death of Christ shall be natural and without violence. The original term signifies that he shall be slain, cut off, and that his life shall be taken away by an extraneous effort.

It is therefore evident, that Christ shall be put to death, and as Daniel adds, "** That no body will declare for him, or take his part.*" It is therefore also evident, that since Christ shall be sent to the Jews, they shall be the people who shall kill him, and that all the persons in authority among them shall consent or even contribute to his death.

It would be useless to dispute about the dates, the explication, the beginning and end of the weeks, since I have said enough on that subject in chap. XI. I shall in this respect yield whatever can be desired. A single point which cannot be denied is sufficient for my purpose; Christ was to be put to death in the midst of the people to whom he should be sent; I want no more than this, because if this is granted me, I have the whole, since the following truths arise from it.

1. That the Christ who shall not be put to death by the Jews, cannot be him whom the scriptures promise.
2. That to be condemned to death by the Jews, will be a proof of the coming of the true Messiah.
3. That the conspiracy of persons in power against him, will not hinder him from being called the Holy One. †
4. That his death, tho' looked upon as a deserved punishment, will prove the source of eternal righteousness, and put an end to the reign of sin. ‡

Thus all the prejudices against Christ, are turned into proofs for him; and if I find that all the rest of the prophecy corresponds exactly to the consequences of his death;

** This is according to the author's translation from the original, but our English Bible has it otherwise: the words are these, Shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself.*

† And to anoint the most holy. Ibid. ver. 24.

‡ To make an end of sins, and to bring in everlasting righteousness. Ibid.

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death ; that the city where he was fixed on the cross is destroyed * that the temple is reduced to ashes, that the sacrifices commanded by the law are abolished, that the desolation of Judah is without help ; I do not doubt for a single moment, but he is the Christ and the king whom the prophets pointed at ; and tho' the Jews reject him because they put him on the cross, 'tis because they put him on the cross that I adore him.

A R T. II.

The Messiah was to be fixed to the cross and die upon it, according to the prophecy of David.

THE holy Spirit has not only revealed to the prophets that the Messiah should be put to death ; but also that he should die upon the cross.

David has clearly mentioned it in Psalm xxii. "They have pierced my hands and my feet, † I may tell all my bones, they look and stare upon me. They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture."

It is impossible to apply any such passage to David, and the expressions can never be made to bear a figurative sense. We can never say of a man that people have pierced his hands and his feet, in order to signify that he has been pursued with a great deal of hatred, and that designs have been formed against his life, especially if we consider all the circumstances of which David speaks. "For dogs have compassed me, the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me." The person of whom

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* And the people of the prince that shall come, shall destroy the city, and the sanctuary ; and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. Ibid. 26.

† Instead of *they have pierced*, a great many of the Jews prefer another manner of reading the original, which implies as a lion. But besides that this expression can bear no meaning here, it is visibly a fault of some copies, owing to the change of a letter into another like it. There were several copies free from this error, which the Jews themselves acknowledge, Demuis on this Psalm.

he speaks, has no possibility of escape or flight. They have pierced my hands and my feet: he is therefore at least taken, stopped, and in the power of his enemies, which did not happen to David. I may tell all my bones: he was therefore extended with violence, and exposed to the view of those who were spectators of his punishment.

They look and stare upon me: he is therefore fixed and immovable, his enemies calmly enjoy the pleasure of seeing him suffer. They wait for his death, and they watch him till it happens.

They have divided my garments among them: he is therefore a man publicly condemned, whose spoils belong to those who are the ministers of his death. He is a man without hope, without help, a man expiring, to whom his cloaths are of no use.

They cast lots upon my vesture: it was therefore a real and not a figurative stripping. They were the very cloaths which Jesus wore before he was fixed to the cross; since they divide what cannot be torn without being lost, and cast lots on that which would be spoiled if it was divided; it is therefore the personal spoil of a man, and not the pillage of his house and goods.

What perspicuity do not those observations add to these words, so clear, so simple, and so natural in themselves? They have pierced my hands and my feet, which denote the crucifixion of Christ in a more distinct manner, than the relation of any of the evangelists?

The subsequent part of the psalm, which is a prediction of his resurrection and glory, is a manifest proof, that he who was fixed to the cross is the same with him who is the light of the Gentiles. * "My praise shall be of thee in the great congregation: I will pay my vows before them that fear him. All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee. For the kingdom is the Lord's, and he is the governor among the nations."

What connexion could the deliverance of David have with the conversion of all the nations of the earth? and who

* Psalm xxii.

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|| Ibid.

who on the contrary does not see, that it is on the death and resurrection of Christ that light and happiness depend? Who also can find a reasonable sense in these words, when applied to David: || "The meek shall eat and be satisfied; they shall praise the Lord that seek him; your heart shall live for ever: and they that be fat upon earth shall eat and worship: all they that go down to the dust shall bow before him?" To what sacrifice of thanksgiving could David invite all the poor and all the rich of the earth? by what nourishment has he given them eternal life? and how could he render them all adorers of the true God, before admitting them to those which he had offered up?

But, on the contrary, who does not know that the eucharist is the sacrifice of the thanksgiving of Christ; that he there at the same time celebrates his death and his resurrection; that he invites all the rich and the poor to it; that he there communicates an eternal life to them?

It is therefore certain, that the Messiah was to die upon the cross; and that the fruit of his death should be the conversion of all the people; and that all those who embrace the gospel, shall partake in the sacrifice offered by the Messiah, as a thanksgiving after his resurrection. And when these points are thus certain, who is so blind, as not to discover Christ in all that David says of the Messiah?

A R T. III.

It is predicted, that the patience of the Messiah should be looked upon as weakness, and his confidence in God, as vanity.

THE psalm we are now explaining, not only asserts that he was to be crucified, but also that his patience should be insulted, and looked upon as impotence and weakness; that he should be upbraided with his confidence in God, as vain and ill grounded; and that the Jews should be assured that he was not the Messiah,

|| Ibid. 26, 27.

Messiah, because God did not work a miracle for his deliverance. * "All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake their heads, saying, He trusted on the Lord, that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delights in him".

This is therefore a compleat proof that Christ is the Messiah, since all this has been done to Christ; since the very terms used by the prophets have been employed by the priests and the Pharisees to reproach Christ with his weakness, and the insignificance of his confidence in his Father; and since Christ and his Father have worked no miracle to interrupt his crucifixion, and make blasphemies cease.

If Christ had been sacrificed by an obedient and faithful man, as Isaac was by Abraham, he might have been the type or figure of the Messiah, but I should not have acknowledged him for the Messiah himself. If he had died amidst the groans of the people; if his oblation had appeared voluntary; if his patience and meekness had softened his enemies; if he had performed some miracles either to deliver himself from their hands, or to put an end to their blasphemies; I should not have hoped for salvation from him. The Saviour promised was, according to the prophets, to die loaded with reproaches. † He was to be esteemed a worm of the earth, rather than a man. He was to be as remarkable, for the ignominy with which he was treated, as for the sufferings he bore; so that I cannot mistake Christ, whom the Jews treated in all respects as the Messiah ought to have been treated, and thus taught us to discern him by covering him with reproaches.

"The Lord, says he by one of his prophets, ‡ hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back. I gave my back to the smiters, and

* Psalm xxii. 7, 8.

† He giveth his cheek to him that smiteth him, he is filled full with reproach. Lament. iii. 30.

But I am a worm and no man. Psalm xxii.

He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. Isa. liii. 3.

‡ Isa. l. 5, &c. *What precedes and follows in Isaiah, shews plainly he does not speak of himself, and the thing will not admit of a dispute.*

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* Zech.

“and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair, and
 “I hid not my face from shame and spitting; for the
 “Lord God will help me, therefore shall I not be con-
 “founded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and
 “I know that I shall not be ashamed. He is near
 “that justifieth me, who will contend with me”? So
 distinct and circumstantiate a prophecy teaches me, with
 what respect I ought to read the accomplishment of it in
 the gospel; what esteem I ought to have for the ignomi-
 nies of Christ, the cause of which is here revealed to me;
 and with what gratitude I ought to prostrate myself be-
 fore him who has refused nothing of what was my due,
 and who has delivered me from eternal confusion, by
 submitting for me to the greatest indignities. Nothing
 for the future shall be more precious to me than the re-
 proaches of him who saved me. I shall, like Moses,
 prefer them to all the treasures of Egypt; and I shall be
 so far from blushing at them, that I shall consider them
 as a satisfactory proof that Christ is the Messiah, and that
 it is through him that I have access to the Father.

A R T. IV.

*It is predicted that the Jews shall universally lament him
 whom they have pierced.*

THE Jews themselves will one day know the value
 of the sufferings and ignominies of Christ, and they
 will deplore the blindness which concealed and hid
 the Godhead and love of him who died for them. “And
 “I will pour, says the Lord, * upon the house of
 “David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the
 “spirit of grace and of supplications; and they shall
 “look upon him whom they have pierced, and they
 “shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son,
 “and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in
 “bitterness for his first-born. In that day shall there be
 “a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of
 “Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon; and the
 “land

* Zech. xii. 10.

“land shall mourn, every family apart, the family of
“the house of David apart, and their wives apart”.

So universal a mourning, which excepts no family is not that of a small number of Jews who were afflicted for the death of Christ when it was still recent: this general affliction shall be the effect of the divine Spirit, and of prayers put up for the whole nation. The Holy Ghost, by dispelling the cloud of darkness which has so long concealed the Saviour of the world from them, will strike them with a lively sorrow for having pierced him with nails and with a spear, and for having despised the fountains of living waters which their wounds had opened.

But at whatever time this change of dispositions may happen, these two things are certain. First, That Christ was to die of the wounds which the Jews should give him, at a time when they did not know him, and and that these are deep and terrible wounds, * such as those of a man fixed to the cross.

The second is, That the Jews shall be touched with repentance, and with a bitter grief return to him whom they have crucified.

It is therefore certain that the Jews in vain expect another Messiah than him whom they have crucified; and that the two-fold character of the Messiah is to be fixed upon the cross by his own people, and afterwards bitterly lamented by the people who put him there; which is another compleat proof that Jesus is the Messiah.

CH A P.

* This expression, *and they shall look upon him whom they have pierced*, implies real, bodily, visible wounds, that cannot be explained in a figurative sense. Besides, a real death must be here meant, since it is compared to that of an only son, and of a first-born.

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C H A P. XXIII.

Without the light [which the death and reproaches of Christ diffuse on the scriptures, they would not be understood by us.

A R T. I.

First example.

THE death and reproaches of Christ, which seem to conceal and darken him, are on the contrary the principle mark by which we ought to know him; and without this key we can comprehend nothing of those passages of scripture which predict him.

“Wherefore * when he cometh into the world he
“faith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but
“a body hast thou † prepared me: in burnt-offerings
“and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure: then
“said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is
“written of me) to do thy will O God.”

The Messiah then was to stand instead of the victims commanded by the law; he was to take the place of the sacrifices offered for sin. 'Tis therefore his blood which is to be shed, instead of that of animals which God does not accept. It was for this purpose that he came into the world; and with this design God formed a body for him, that he might offer him up a whole burnt offering. There is not a single word in all these expressions which does not imply the idea of a real immolation, and consequently a bloody death: but without this idea the whole becomes unintelligible.

A R T.

* I quote the 40th psalm in the very terms of St. Paul to the Hebrews, x. 5.

† Instead of *thou hast prepared a body for me*, the original hath, *mine ears hast thou opened*, naming the ears for the whole body, because of obedience, whose organ they are.

A R T. II.

Second example.

THIS is also the sense of these words, "Lo I
" come (in the volume of the book it is written
" of me) to do thy will O God : " for our Saviour by
them points at the most antient prophecy relating to him-
self, which in sufficiently clear terms includes the pre-
diction of his death. " And I will put enmity, says
" the Lord to the serpent *, between thee and the wo-
" man, and between thy seed and her seed : it shall
" bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

What is strongest in the serpent is denoted by his
head, and that which is weakest in the woman's seed,
that is in the son to be born of a woman only, is the
heel. That which is most elevated, proud and lofty in
the serpent, shall be crushed by that which is weakest,
lowest, and in appearance most contemptible in the son
of the woman, who shall overcome him.

The head of the serpent shall be bruised by the very
heel which the serpent shall bruise. The serpent shall
be overcome when he thinks he is victorious : he shall
lose his life by taking it from the deliverer, and shall
die when he makes him lose his life.

When he has made the Messiah be fixed on the cross,
what can he do to hurt him ? He will bruise that which
is weak ; he will make a mortal humanity die, and
put into the sepulchre a flesh subject to our infirmities :
but he cannot hinder this flesh from rising glorious, im-
mortal, and incapable of suffering. He will therefore
bruise the infirmity and mortality in his conqueror ; but
in so doing he will lose his head and his life : and what
he esteemed weakest in Christ, will be the very heel
which will bruise him.

The cross of Christ unveils this mystery ; but without
this cross, the most antient promise of the Messiah re-
mains covered with an impenetrable darkness.

A R T.

* Gen. iii. 15.

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A R T. III.

Third example.

THE same also holds true of another prophecy, in which the deliverer of Israel assures us, that he will be the destroyer of death. "I will ransom * them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plague! O grave, I will be thy destruction!"

These expressions denote the triumph of the Messiah over him whom the scriptures stile the prince of death. Thou hast imagined, says his conqueror insulting, to put a stop to my designs, by depriving me of life: whereas on the contrary, it is by my death that I shall accomplish them. Thou hast hoped to retain my body in the grave, and my soul in gloomy mansions allotted for other spirits; but it is because I descended † thither that I have broken all its bars. Thou thinkest thou hast devoured me, and thou knowest not that I am life and immortality. 'Tis not me whom thou hast swallowed up, ‡ but it is thou who hast deceived thyself, and art caught on the hook thou hadst prepared for me. My death for a moment, proves thy eternal death: thou canst not retain me, and I strip and divest thee of every thing.

This is the sense of these words, "O death, where is thy sting! O grave, where is thy victory!" But if the Messiah was not to deliver his elect by dying, nor to redeem them by descending himself into their prison; we no longer know what these words signify, we no longer see wherein the triumph and the insult consist; we no longer see how death is conquered, and hell stript and destroyed.

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A R T.

* Hosea xiii. 14.

† 1 Cor. xv. 55.

‡ Heb. xi. 14.

§ 1 Pet. xii. 22.

A R T. IV.

Fourth example.

IF the Messiah was not to have died, we could comprehend nothing of what he says by one of his prophets, "As for thee also, O Zion*", by the blood of "thy covenant, I have sent forth thy prisoners out of "the pit wherein is no water."

This blood is not certainly that of the victims commanded by the law. The scripture is so far from looking on this blood as the price of the liberty of the captives of Zion, that it never ascribed any virtue to it. These wells, or that abyss without water, do not imply an ordinary servitude. These captives, of whom blood is the ransom, are not those of Babylon. This covenant mentioned is not the antient covenant; because it immediately follows the coming of Christ, and is declared in these terms: "Rejoice greatly †, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold thy king cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation."

It is therefore necessary, that the blood of this new covenant must be that of the Sun of righteousness, and the Saviour of the world; otherways the whole of the passage would be inexplicable.

A R T. V.

Fifth example.

THE Messiah, in the most grateful and exalted strain, returns thanks, because he did not see corruption, nor was his soul left in hell. "I have set "the Lord, says he ‡, always before me; because he "is at my right-hand, I shall not be moved: therefore "my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh "also

* Zechar. ix. 11.

† Zechar. ix. 9.

‡ Psal. xvi. 8, &c.

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“also shall rest in hope. For thou wilt not leave my
“soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one
“to see corruption. Thou wilt shew me the path of
“life; in thy presence is fulness of joy, at thy right-
“hand there are pleasures for evermore.”

All this supposes a real death and a true descent into hell, an exemption from the corruption which commonly happens to the dead, a true resurrection, and a return to life. Without this, both the prayer and thanksgiving of the Messiah are covered with thick darkness.

We may discover in the scriptures a great many things of a similar nature, which only become intelligible by the death of Christ; and we may justly affirm, that without understanding this mystery, so incomprehensible by the senses and reason, the holy scriptures are themselves incomprehensible: because they never lose sight of that great object, but refer all to it: and in order to understand them, we must place ourselves in the same point of view with the prophets who wrote them.

C H A P. XXIV.

The death of Christ on the cross, his burial, his resurrection, and his glory among the Gentiles, predicted and typified by antient figures and types. 1st figure, the brazen serpent. 2d figure, Moses praying with his hands extended, and obtaining victory. 3d figure, Jonas. 4th figure, Joseph sold. 5th figure, the death of Abel and the punishment of Cain.

BESIDES the predictions of the cross, the burying and resurrection of Christ, the divine Spirit has employed others, which are seemingly more adapted to our weakness, because they are a kind of pictures or images which speak to our senses, and instruct us as it were by the eye.

A R T. I

FIRST FIGURE.

Brazen serpent.

THE people of Israel, grown untractable and inclined to murmur in the desert, were punished for their crime by fiery serpents *, which proved mortal to many. Others, intimidated by this chastisement, asked of Moses to make it cease; and God listening to his prayer, ordered him to make a brazen serpent, and set it up upon a wooden standard, that it might be seen from all quarters, and that those who were bit by the fiery serpents might be cured by looking on it.

There is nothing which better represents to us the cross of Christ, and its happy effects.

True serpents poison men, by giving them burning wounds. Christ assumes the external appearance of a flesh, like that which is criminal, but without taking the poison of it †. He exposes on the cross this flesh which was innocent, but mortal and capable of suffering; and his death delivers us from death. By seeing him we are cured, by believing in him we are saved. From all quarters we may see him on the cross, which he chose in order to shew himself to all the world: and from every part the ‡ eyes of the faithful are turned towards him, as the author and finisher of their faith and hope.

A R T.

* Numb. xxi. 6, 8, 9.

† John iii. 14.

‡ Heb. xii. 2.

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* Exod.

A R T. II.
SECOND FIGURE.

Moses praying with extended hands, and obtaining victory.

THE Amalekites attacked the Hebrew people in the desert: Joshua had orders to engage them; and Moses, accompanied with Aaron and Hur, remained upon a mountain, whence they could discover the hostile armies. He prayed with outstretched arms*, and while he kept them in that situation, the Israelites prevailed, but as soon as thro' weakness his hands dropt, the Israelites were worsted. Aaron and Hur, observing this, made Moses sit down on a stone, and on each side supported his hands till the setting of the sun, and till the victory over the Amalekites was compleat.

The figure cannot approach nearer to the truth. Christ elevated on the cross, and praying for us is all our strength; without him our enemies would become too powerful for us; but the efficacy of his extended hands puts them to flight. If we cease to look to him for help, we cease to be victorious: if we return to him by faith, the victory returns to us; for his hands do not become weary like those of Moses, but we become weary in being attentive to them.

We must, however, observe this difference between Moses and Christ: the hands of Moses are free, and yet he becomes weary; the hands of Christ are pierced, and yet his love and patience are not wearied. Moses could not pray standing, with his arms extended, till the end of the battle; Christ has his whole body suspended, and violently racked on the cross. Aaron and Hur make Moses sit down and sustain his hands? Christ is supported by nails, and for assistants has only two criminals.

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A R T.

* Exod. xvii. 11, 12, 13.

A R T. III.

THIRD FIGURE.

Jonas remaining three days and three nights in the whale's belly, and coming out of it alive.

THE death and resurrection of Christ are at the same time predicted and typified by the surprizing history of Jonas *. The agitated sea, as soon as he is thrown into it, becomes calm : the fish which devoured him, commonly thought to be a whale, kept him three days and three nights † in her entrails, without suffocating him. She restores him alive ‡ after that interval : and this prophet, who before his mysterious death and resurrection had refused to go and preach to Nineveh, goes thither without the least reluctance, after he came out of his grave ; is there listened to with infinite respect ||, tho, the inhabitants of that great city had not seen the prodigies he recounted to them ; and against all appearances faith and repentance became universal in a nation, which, but a little before, was sunk in vice and infidelity.

Who can be so blind as not to discover in these circumstances all the oeconomy of the mystery of Jesus Christ. Before his death, the wrath and indignation against man could not be appeased ; but as soon as he expires they are changed into mercy.

He enters into the grave, his soul descends into hell, death has swallowed him up. But he shall rise from the grave alive, after three days and three nights. He shall break open the gates of hell, and conquer death, who appears to have swallowed him up.

Before his death and resurrection, he was forbidden to declare the kingdom of heaven and preach repentance,

* Jonah i. 15.

† Ibid. chap. ii. 1.

‡ Ibid. ver. 11.

|| Ibid. chap. iii. 5.

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fance, except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel * ; but after his resurrection from the grave, this prohibition was removed, and the gospel was preached to all the earth. The Gentiles believed mysteries which they had not seen ; they quitted their idols, and repented on the simple word of the prophets and apostles, who were before unknown to them : and while the family of Jesus Christ renounce him, the Gentiles confess him, and look upon him as their Saviour.

A R T. IV.

FOURTH FIGURE.

Joseph sold, in a mysterious sense, killed, and put into the grave, great in Egypt, and adored by his brothers.

CHRIST and his death, &c. were long ago predicted, in the manner in which Joseph had been treated by his brethren ; and no prophecy is more express than his history, of which Christ is the end and the truth.

Joseph's brethren, being enemies to his virtue and jealous of his glory, resolved to kill him at the time when he was searching for them †, and was sent to them by their father. They let him down into a dry pit ‡ with a design to let him die. They tinged his garment with the blood of a goat which they killed in his stead. But altering their resolution, they take || him out of the pit in order to sell him to strangers, who carried him into Egypt, which he preserved by his wisdom, of which he became the chief ruler, by his acts of beneficence §, and whither his family came to ask for provision to support them, and where his brethren often fell prostrate before him without knowing him ; tho' by their envy and injustice,

* Matth. x. 5, 6. and Matth. xviii. 19.

† Gen. xxxvii. 13, 16.

‡ Ibid. ver. 20.

|| Ibid. ver. 28.

§ Ibid. xli. 41. and xlii 6, 8.

injustice, they themselves unexpectedly contributed to the accomplishment of the predictions of his glory, the effect of which they were willing to destroy.

Thus the brethren of Christ, according to the flesh, could not without envy behold the splendor of his virtue and of his miracles. They more than once formed a design to take away the life of him whom their heavenly Father had sent them, and who fought them from a joint principle of obedience and love. They actually shed his blood; but his garment was only stained with it: his humanity alone having undergone death, while his divinity remained incapable of suffering. They put him in the grave, of which the pit of Joseph was the figure; but like him he came out of it alive: they joyfully quitted him to the Gentiles, to whom they had delivered him before his death, and he is become their Saviour and their King, by his mercy and acts of kindness. A part of his family humbled itself before him, while the other, which is the most numerous, loves better to suffer famine and hunger, than to come and acknowledge him in Egypt. But the whole family will go thither one day, and adore him whose glory * they thought to have crushed, by taking away his life, whereas they have only accomplished the prophecies which predicted it; all the obstacles they attempted to put to it, having been chosen by providence as means to advance it.

A R T. V.

FIFTH FIGURE.

The death of Abel caused by the jealousy of religion, and the punishment of Cain.

IT is impossible not to see in the death of Abel a figure and a prophecy of that of Christ. Abel is righteous, but Cain is not professedly impious. He like his brother offers sacrifices to God, and is seemingly desirous

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* Acts iv

† Acts v.

firous to please him. He is afflicted, because God does not favour him with the same testimonies of approbation as he does his brother. It is the preference in point of religion, which is first the occasion of his jealousy, and afterwards of his hatred, which terminates in the murder of his brother. After the perpetration of this crime, Cain appears composed and satisfied. When God asked him, Where is Abel thy brother? he answered with a kind of contempt; but when God said in express terms, What has thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood cryeth unto me from the ground, he sees nothing more horrid than his own crime, but does not think of repenting, because he judges it unpardonable. He is only afraid of being killed by every one who should meet him; but God assures him that this should not happen, that he shall be a vagabond and a fugitive, but that the sign he would put upon him should be a kind of protection, which should hinder him from being slain by any one that met him.

The brethren of Christ, according to the flesh, who have been his most inveterate enemies, had zeal according to the law. They offered sacrifices to God, they pretended to more righteousness than others, and they could not suffer that God should so visibly prefer Christ to them, by authorising his doctrines by miracles, the glory of which darkened their glory. This preference, which was so public and open, excited their envy and hatred, which could not be satiated, but by shedding the blood of the righteous Abel.

A false zeal of religion at first concealed from them the enormity of their crime. When the first accounts of the resurrection of Jesus were spread abroad*, they thought to check them, either by money distributed to the guards of his sepulchre, or by threatening his apostles.

But when the miracles, wrought in his name, became so public and manifest, that they could not shut their eyes against them; they passed from contempt to despair †, and

* Acts iv. 16.

† Acts v. 28, and 33.

and from despair to impatience. They were soon after dispersed into all nations, vagabonds and fugitives in all the earth, trembling before those who adore him whom they had slain, fearing every moment to be treated as their crime deserved. But they are preserved by this sensible protection, which was promised to Cain, and which has descended to all his imitators.

C H A P. XXV.

Continuation of the same subject. 6th figure, Isaac. 7th figure, Adam fast asleep, and Eve taken out of his side. 8th figure, the paschal lamb, the blood of which secured the houses of the Hebrews. 9th figure, the entry of the sanctuary forbidden to the priests, and permitted only once-a-year to the high priest when carrying the blood of the victims. 10th figure, the sacrifices, the blood of which was carried within the tabernacle, and with the finger seven times sprinkled on the second veil.

A R T I.

SIXTH FIGURE.

Isaac.

THE mystery of Christ offering himself a sacrifice for man, and rising from the dead with so much glory, is so deep and so pregnant with wonders, that it cannot be worthily represented by one figure or type. Many figures must concur, that one may supply what another wants; and that the whole may have singular characters which cannot be imitated by any thing else, and which nothing but truth itself can represent.

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In the apparent death of Joseph, and in the real death of Abel, we see nothing but the sins of men. The love of the Father who delivers up his Son for us, and the cheerful obedience of the Son do not appear in these two figures; but they shine in an admirable manner in the sacrifice of Isaac.

This dear, this only son, sole heir of the promises, in whom all the nations were to be blessed, is destined to death by his father, whom he followed to mount Moriah *, a part of mount Calvary. He carried the wood on which he was to be sacrificed on his shoulders. He consents to be bound by his father without resistance, and even without speaking. He obeys, he is silent, and on his part every thing is consummated. He dies in a mystery, and by his dispositions, God, who demanded his life, restores it to him. It is God who raises him after he was sacrificed. It is after this immolation and this resurrection, that Isaac becomes a federal father. He had no spouse till after he had offered himself †; and what appeared an obstacle to the execution of the promises, puts a seal to them, and in the designs of God proves the only means of accomplishing them; for it was then that God added an oath to the promise ‡, and declared that he annexed the multiplication of the family of Abraham, and the benediction of all the nations by the son that should spring from him, to his obedience and that of Isaac.

The servants who had accompanied them a part of the road, had orders to stop || and did not go quite to the mountain. Such a sacrifice was to them a secret and a mystery. They knew neither the design of the father, nor the voluntary obedience of the son; and in this respect they were a figure of all those to whom the most august and divine mystery of Christ's sacrifice remains unknown.

After

* Gen. xxii. 2. According to the Hebrew, we know that the temple was built on this mountain, which is joined to that of Calvary.

† See Genesis xxiv.

‡ Gen. xxii. 16, 17, 18.

|| Gen. xxii.

After so sensible and so similar a figure, who can be ignorant who the true Isaac is, and who the father is whom Abraham only represented? Who does not perceive that in the sacrifice of Christ, men were only the ministers and executors of an eternal counsel; that they have only laid upon his shoulders the wood of which he himself made choice; that it was only tied there, because he inclined it should be so; that he died in order to rise again and accomplish the promises; and that it was by what appeared an obstacle to the multiplication of his family, that he inclined to found his church and crown her with blessings?

A R T. II.

SEVENTH FIGURE.

Adam fast asleep and Eve extracted from his side.

ADAM had from the beginning of the world been the prophet and the type of the same mysteries.

Before God had thrown him * into a sleep, liker death than a natural sleep, during which he took out one of his ribs in order to form a spouse for him; he was alone and without society, though surrounded with animals in which appeared some traces of wisdom and reason, but only with respect to sensible things. But upon his awaking, which may be called his resurrection, he saw his own resemblance † or image in a spouse engendered in his heart, whom he had given life to by his death, and whom he had dignified by his blood. This spouse, animated with the same breath of life as himself, was the mother of all living. ‡ Thus it was from the wound of the first man, that the number and fruitfulness of his family proceeded.

Christ, the second Adam, has been typified in the first. Before his sleep, that is, before his death, whether real or foreseen, the earth was only inhabited by men

* Gen. ii. 20.

† Ibid. ver. 23.

‡ Gen. iii. 20.

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men become like beasts. No one resembled him, no one was worthy of him, and his wisdom was unknown. But the wound made in his side, during his sleep, gave birth to a spouse formed in his heart, and made fair by his blood. He has animated her and rendered her fruitful on his awaking; and as she was full of his spirit, she has communicated it to her children, who are the only persons that in the true sense are to be looked upon as the living and the wife.

I am not afraid that serious persons will look upon these relations so striking and singular, as arbitrary and accidental. It is evident that the formation of Eve, from a rib taken from Adam during a sleep which destroyed all sensation and appearances of life, was mysterious. It is also evident, that the church, which is sprung from the heart of Christ, and which could not spring from him till after the death of the old man, annexed to the real death of our Saviour, is the accomplishment of the mystery concealed in the sleep of Adam and the formation of Eve. These two prodigies are certainly united, and the one is made for the other. We are astonished at the first, and very justly, when we separate it from the second. And the second produces a still greater surprize when we detach it from the first, which was the prediction and the type. But their union changes our astonishment into admiration and thanksgiving, and is a sensible proof, that the mysteries of the death and resurrection of Christ have from the beginning of the world been the principal objects of the designs of God.

A R T. III.

EIGHTH FIGURE.

The pascal lamb; the blood of which secured the houses of the Hebrews.

WHEN it pleased God to deliver his people from Egypt, and by the last chastisement to compel the Egyptians to restore them their liberty, he ordered

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by Moses that each family of the Hebrews should chuse a lamb on the tenth day of the month Nisan; that on the fourteenth towards the evening, they should sacrifice this lamb, and with its blood tinge the doors of each house, ordering that no one should come out till the destroying angel had killed the first-born of the Egyptians, and the first-born of all their animals.

Before I make any application of a ceremony visibly so mysterious, I ask whether it is not evident, that it was by the blood of the immolated lamb, * that the lives of the Israelites were preserved, and that it was to its merit, and not that of the Hebrews, that we ought to ascribe their safety and liberty? I ask whether the difference which God makes between them and the Egyptians, is not intirely founded on their door being tinged with this blood? I ask whether an Hebrew going out of his house, † before the passage of the angel, is not comprehended in the misfortune of Egypt? Lastly, I ask what is the price and worth of a lamb, whose blood infallibly gives life to those who are tinged with it, and the non-asperision or neglect of which is sufficient to condemn Jew and Gentile to death without distinction.

Tho' the Messiah was not already come; who could doubt but such a mystery typified him, since he was to be the Saviour and deliverer of his people? and who could not be prepared to believe that he will deliver his people, and save them by the effusion of his blood, when 'tis obvious that it is to the immolation of a lamb and the asperision of its blood, that all Israel owe their lives and liberties?

How strong then is the evidence that Christ is the Messiah, and that he is the person typified by the paschal lamb, not only because he has delivered us from slavery and death by the effusion of his blood, but also because he has been willing to fulfil the external circumstances of the type, by offering himself voluntarily to the Jews as their paschal sacrifice on the tenth day of the month Nisan, by making his public entry into Jerusalem, by being sacrificed on the fourteenth, between the two

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* Exod. xii. 12, 13.

† Exod. xii. 22.

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evenings, and at the very time in which the Hebrews sacrificed the paschal lamb.

A R T. IV.

NINTH FIGURE.

The entering into the sanctuary forbidden to the priests, and only permitted once a-year to the high priests, when carrying the blood of the victims.

TIS not to be doubted but the tabernacle, of which God had given the design and proportions to Moses, was an imitation and type of a more sublime and august model, * since it was upon this original, shewn to Moses on the mountain, that the whole plan was executed; and it would be absurd to imagine that the original was material like the tabernacle, and that the difference only consisted in the architecture and ornaments.

This tabernacle, which was certainly mysterious, was divided into two parts; the first, in which were the candlestick, the table for the shew-bread, and the altar for the incense, was forbid to the people, and even to the Levites; the priests alone could enter into it, by a special command, and only during the time of their ministry: the second † called the holy of holies, in which were the ark of the covenant and mercy-seat, was separated from the first by a veil which was never drawn aside, and the high priest alone could enter into it once a-year after the oblation of certain victims, the blood of which he carried into that tremendous place, inaccessible to every one but himself.

I shall confine myself to this brief account, and only ask a sincere and impartial man to tell me, whether it does not to him appear certain, that the second part of the tabernacle, in which are the ark of the covenant and the mercy-seat, is a representation of heaven where

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* Exod. xxv. 40.

† Levit. xvi. 2. Exod. xxx. 10. Heb. ix. 7. Levit. xvi. 17.

God resides in his majesty? that the veil which covers the entry of the sanctuary, is a figure of the obstacle which shuts up heaven? that the privilege of the high priest is a proof, that another priest is expected? that the blood which he carries into the sanctuary is the emblem of the blood of another victim? that since when he comes out he leaves every thing in the same state, neither his entry nor his sacrifice have changed any thing? that since he, every year, repeats the same ceremony, he discovers that is a simple prediction of what will one day be the accomplishment of it? and that being obliged always to offer up the same sacrifice, by that means declared insufficient, but not being allowed to appear before God but with their blood, he clearly foretells another priesthood, another sacrifice, and another Mediator?

Granting, if possible, that this type did not relate to Christ, yet it is evident that so long as the tabernacle shall subsist, God will be provoked against men; that the throne of his grace will be inaccessible; that the legal priesthood will be incapable of mitigating him; that the victim, the blood of which it shall offer, will only prove that another sacrifice and another blood are necessary; and that if the Messiah is to constitute the glory and happiness of Israel, and reconcile them to God, it is necessary he should be a priest in another sense than Aaron, and shed another blood than that of animals.

Let us after this examine, at what time the tabernacle, of which the temple was the continuation, ceased; at what time the veil which covered the holy of holies was torn; at what time the legal priesthood and victims were abolished; and we must confess that the whole law, its tabernacle, its priesthood, and victims, only predicted and typified the priesthood and sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

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A R T. V.

TENTH FIGURE.

The sacrifices, the blood of which was carried into the inner tabernacle, and seven times sprinkled with the finger upon the second veil.

AS it is a truth of the greatest importance, and effectually proves the christian religion, that the Messiah was to die, in order to reconcile men to God, 'tis necessary to point out the satisfactory proofs of it in the ancient sacrifices.

Of these there were several kinds, some were offered as thanksgivings, and others for the expiation of sins; and among these last, some were more solemn than others, either for the priest when his fault had been public, or for the people when the sin had been general.

The priest laid his hands on the victim which was to be offered in his name; and the elders of the people laid their hands on the sacrifice which was to bear their iniquity. The blood of both these victims was carried into the first part of the tabernacle by the priest, * who dipping his finger in this blood, seven times sprinkled some drops of it on the veil which separated the sanctuary, or holy of holies; a veil which as before observed remained always undrawn, which concealed the face of the Lord and his clemency, of which the ark of the covenant and the mercy-seat were the symbols, and beyond which the high priest alone could pass once a-year.

Such a ceremony is very instructive to those who will but be attentive to it. But we shall interpret it to those who stand in need of an explication. Let us ask the priest, whose ignorance (for this is the name the scripture gives the sins expiated by sacrifices) has thrown the people into error, why he lays his hands on the victim

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* Levit. iv. 6, 7, 17.

This veil has a particular name, in Hebrew *Paroketh*, and St. Paul calls it the second veil. Heb. ix. 3.

ctim which he offers ; and let us put the same question to the elders of the people. They answer without hesitation, that they are worthy of death, and by putting their hands on the head of the victim which is substituted in their room, they ask of God that he would lay the punishment they have deserved upon it and impute their iniquities to it.

Let us afterwards ask the priest, why he carries the blood of the victim into the tabernacle, without daring to pass the veil which hides the mercy-seat ? why he throws some drops of the blood upon the veil which is an obstacle to him ? and why he repeats that ceremony seven times ? His answer to these questions is not so express as to the first. I do, says he, what I am commanded, I stop where the law stops me, and I only know that I ask pardon for myself and the people on account of the blood of the victim, and that I desire that the effect of the blood I sprinkle may pass through the veil which is opposite to me. Such an answer is sufficient for me ; and I continue to ask him, whether it is permitted to him, after such an asperision, to lift the veil, or even to touch it ? He replies such a piece of rashness would cost me my life. How then, continue I, do you not see these essential truths which you yourself declare by your conduct ; that God cannot be appeased but by the effusion of blood ; that the blood of the most solemn legal victims is useless ; that the sins of the priests and the people are equally retained ; that the veil which separates you from God, remains always immovable ; and that all you do by seven times repeating the asperision of blood which obtains nothing, is to denote the design and end of the law, which teaches you to desire another Mediator than yourself, another priesthood than your own, another blood than that of the victims which you offer, another reconciliation, and another righteousness than those which subsist with real and public proofs that you are still unrighteous, and that God is inflexible ?

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C H A P. XXVI.

Continuation of the same subject. 11th figure, the scape-goat. 12th figure, the sacrifice of the heifer, the ashes of which serve for all the legal purifications. 13th figure, sacrifice for the cure of the leprous. 14th figure, cities of refuge, out of which no person could come but at the death of the high priest. 15th figure, the ancient covenant sealed by the blood of animals. How convincing the proof drawn from the foregoing figures is.

A R T. I.

ELEVENTH FIGURE.

The scape-goat.

ALL these truths are rendered sensible in another type, all the circumstances of which clearly point at Jesus Christ.

On the day of the general expiation, fixed to the tenth day of the seventh month, all the people of Israel were obliged to confess themselves sinners in common, and in particular in their own name, and in that of their fathers, ascending to the beginning of the world; and it was a crime worthy of death * not to be deeply afflicted and in tears on that day.

Among the sacrifices ordered to accompany this public and universal repentance, there was one of a singular nature, which was only offered on that day. The people offered two goats † as the victims for their sins, and to stand in their own stead. One of these was chosen by lot to be immolated, and the other was reserved for the vengeance of God, and driven into the desert. After having carried the blood of the first into the holy of holies, the high priest came and laid his hands upon the

* Levit. xxiii. 29.

† Levit. xvi. 5, 8, 20, 21, 26,

the latter, called the scape-goat, in the name of all the people : holding his hands extended on its head, he publicly confessed the sins and iniquities of Israel, begged of God that he would impute them to the victim destined to bear his wrath and justice ; and afterwards committed the goat to a man prepared for that office, who conducted him to a certain distance in the desert, and returned in the evening to purify himself, without being able to tell in what manner it pleased God to treat the scape-goat.

This day of expiation, or general repentance, was that on which it was permitted to the high priest to enter into the holy of holies, carrying along with him the blood of the first goat sacrificed for the sins of the people. It was after this honour, and this apparent liberty of appearing before God, that he came to accuse himself, all the people, all their ancestors, and all generations, holding his hands extended on the scape-goat ; and thus testifying in a public manner, that his entry into the sanctuary was a simple prediction of the entry of another priest into another sanctuary after another sacrifice.

Upon the scape-goat he laid all the sins of the people, whether old or lately committed. He denounced upon it all the anathemas which the people deserved. He afterwards delivered it up for all, to the divine justice. But a proof that his justice could not be satisfied by such a victim, is, that the same ceremony was repeated every year, * with the accusation of the same sins, and the same confession, that they were only worthy of the maledictions and anathemas denounced on the scape-goat.

What idea must we then form of such a ceremony? Is it serious, if it is always useless? or will it last continually, if it is always without effect? Is it not evident, that since it is so severely enjoined, and so manifestly of no effect, it must be the figure of a real expiation, of which by its institution it denotes the necessity and the promise.

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* Heb. x. 1, 2, 3.

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It is therefore necessary that the sins of all Israel, and consequently of all the nations more involved in guilt than Israel, be one day laid upon the head of a certain victim. It is therefore necessary that all the maledictions due to men should fall on that sacrifice, devoted in the name of all men to the divine vengeance. This sacrifice must then either succumb under the weight of the sins and maledictions which shall be laid upon it, and become as useless as the legal victims, or it must be in itself such a source of righteousness and blessing, as to be able to expiate the sins of the whole world from the fall of Adam, and surmount the maledictions merited, by a super-abundant benediction. This sacrifice typified by the two goats, of which men immolate the one, and God the other, without employing their ministry, must at the same time be put to death by men, and received in secret of God as a sacrifice of a sweet-smelling odour. Lastly, while all the people are witnesses to the bloody oblation of this precious sacrifice, no one must know what passes betwixt God and it, in a solitude inaccessible to the eyes and thoughts of men.

All this must certainly follow, if the sacrifice of the scape-goat, and of that whose blood is visibly shed, is only a type; and it is evident, as before observed, that it is only so far serious as it is typical. Who then is to fulfil the truth of it? is it the Messiah? then Jesus Christ, covered with reproaches, made a public curse, fixed to the cross and cursed according to the law, cruelly put to death by the priests and the people, offering himself in secret for the sins of the whole world, bearing with infinite love to us the whole weight of his justice, and changing our curse into an inexhaustible source of blessings and favors; then, I say, Jesus Christ is the Messiah. And if he is not the Messiah who was to wash away the sins of the world, reconcile Israel to God, and put an end to the figures which predicted the deliverer; where is such a Messiah to be found? what will he come to do in the world? what need shall we have of him, if he comes after the deliverer? or of what use will he be if he goes before him?

A R T.

A R T. II.

TWELFTH FIGURE.

The sacrifice of the heifer, the ashes of which served for all the legal sacrifices.

Nothing is more capable of proving these two essential points, that the ancient sacrifices were types of the death of the Messiah, and that the Messiah was to die to expiate the sins of men, than the sacrifice of the red heifer, the ashes of which served for all the legal purifications.

This sacrifice, on which the purity and holiness of all the tribes depended, was slain without the camp. Its blood was offered up to God, not in the inner part of the tabernacle, but before the first veil, which was seven times slightly sprinkled with it. Its body was burnt so perfectly, that none of it remained except the ashes, which were put in a clean place in order to prepare the cleansing water, with which all those who were impure according to the law were to be sprinkled under pain of death; for it was writ in express terms, * that the person who neglected such a ceremony, should be cut off from among the people.

On the one hand, the ashes of this victim † were in a manner the basis and origin of public and private holiness; and on the other hand, this victim and its ashes rendered all those impure who touched them. The high priest who sacrificed it was impure till the evening, ‡ and could not return into the camp till he had washed himself and his garments. The person who burnt it was impure, and obliged to take the same precautions. He who gathered the ashes was also impure §. He who mixed a small quantity of them with the cleansing water for sprinkling an impure person, became impure himself.

* Numb. xix. 12, 20.

† Ibid. 9.

‡ Ibid. 7, 8.

§ Ibid. 10, 20.

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self. In a word, whoever touched this water destined for the purification of others, forthwith became impure.

Is it possible that a contradiction so visible, and apparently so unworthy of God, should not open the eyes of those who have shut them the most? How is a person polluted and purified by the same thing? and how are the Israelites condemned to death, if they do not purify themselves by a means which pollutes the priest and his ministers, and which can only be employed by a man who was pure before, but ceases to be so by the very zeal he hath to purify another?

How comes it we do not perceive what reconciles these contrarieties, and what these contrarieties themselves render evident? It was necessary there should be a victim for purifying man; for they are all sinners, and all worthy of death, if they continue in their sins. But the law has no victims capable of rendering them righteous, and of purifying their consciences. It must therefore typify what it could not give; and that we might not take the type for the truth, it must declare all those impure who hope to become pure, or purify others by the figure or type alone.

If the law did not oblige men to seek for innocence and purity without themselves, they would be tempted to think themselves pure, or capable of purifying themselves by their own strength; and if it did not annex an impurity to the ministry of those who pretended to purify others by sacrifices and aspersions which do not reach the heart and conscience, men would be tempted to take shadows for the substance, and to become more culpable by a false confidence in useless means, than they were before by their own sins.

It is therefore evident, that the most solemn victim of the law points at another victim; and that the law itself obliges us not to confound the victim, which is only a prediction and a type, with that which is the accomplishment and the truth of it.

But can a victim fulfil all that we see in its type, if it is not really sacrificed, if it is not immolated without the camp, if it does not become the only and universal principle

principle of expiation and righteousness, if its virtue is not communicated by the water which it sanctifies, and if by any other means we can avoid condemnation and death?

The truth or anti-type will certainly have all these characters. But who shall this true sacrifice be, whose precious death shall be the origin of salvation and righteousness to Israel? Can we transport this glory to any other than the Messiah? And if it is proper to the Messiah, can we mistake Christ sacrificed without the camp, expiating the sins of all mankind by the sprinkling of his blood, and communicating his virtue and essence to the waters of baptism, in order to wash and to purify the whole world?

A R T. III.

THIRTEENTH FIGURE.

Sacrifice offered for the cure of the leprous.

WE must be blind, if we do not see in the sacrifice which was to be offered for the leprous after his cure, the natural image of the death of Christ, and of the life which he has restored to us by dying for us.

'Tis certain, that in scripture the leprosy is an emblem of sin. 'Tis to the priests alone * that the scripture attributes the power of discerning it: 'tis to them alone that the scripture leaves the choice of the means and precautions, for knowing certainly whether it is cured. Neither doth the scripture enter into so great a detail of all the differences of this disease, but with a view to give rules to those who are ordered to discern and to cure the diseases of the soul. We have therefore good reason to look upon a leprous person as the image of a sinner; and his sacrifice, as the type of that which to the sinner restores life and innocence. There is only this difference, that the leprous person is cured before he is permitted to offer the sacrifice prescribed by the law; whereas the sinner is not justified but by the sacrifice itself, which is offered for him. But it is an essential character

* Levit. xiii. 1. and xiv. 2.

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character of the law to be without efficacy, and to produce no change in the heart of man; and we ought never to forget, that it can only typify and promise what is so far reserved for another covenant, that it was never accomplished, so long, as it was alone; but only so far as persons belonged to this new covenant by the motions and desires of the heart.

The leprous person, tho' cured, was always impure, and separated from the conversation of men, till he had been purified by two sacrifices, of which I only consider the first. It consisted in offering in his name, two live sparrows without blemish, with cedar-wood, scarlet and hyssop. The priest sacrificed one of these birds, and made its blood flow into an earthen vessel, full of pure and limpid water †. He then took the second bird, and dipped it alive in the water tinged with the blood of that which had been sacrificed. He also dipped in this water the cedar-wood, the scarlet and the hyssop; and of all these, together with the bird bathed in the blood, he sprinkled the leprous person seven times in order to render him pure, according to the law. After this he gave liberty to the live sparrow, which owed this liberty to the death and aspersión of the blood of the bird which had been sacrificed.

Has so lively and natural a type any need of explanation; and is it not more clear than prophecies conceived in the most plain and explicit terms? Does not the sparrow, to which liberty and life are restored, after it is dipt in the water tinged with the blood of that which was sacrificed, represent the leprous person, and by him the sinner, baptized in water mixed with the blood of him who has been sacrificed for him? Is not his being sprinkled seven times with it, a proof that it is from that source alone that he derives his purity? And can we doubt but he would have been for ever separated from the converse of men and saints, (which denotes an external excommunication) if the death of a sacrifice, pure and without spot, had not restored life and innocence to him?

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† Levit. xiv. 5, 6, 7.

But if it is the blood of a certain victim which is to purify the sinner, the important question still returns, who shall this victim be? Shall it be distinct from the Messiah? or shall it be the Messiah himself? Why do we trust in him, if another is to be the author of righteousness and salvation? How can we doubt but he died for sinners, if their expiation and purity depend on his death? Who would shed his blood, if he was known and revered by all? and of what merit would his blood be, if he died without rising again?

All these truths are inseparably connected. The Messiah was to expiate the sins of his people. He was to die for them, and purify them by the sprinkling of his blood. He must also rise again, since his death reconciles them to God and his sacrifice is accepted. Otherwise he would succumb under his ministry, and remain the victim of the divine vengeance without appeasing it.

A R T. IV.

FOURTEENTH FIGURE.

The cities of refuge, out of which no person could come, except upon the death of the high priest.

GOD by Moses ordered, * that six cities of refuge should be appointed, three on each side the Jordan, at equal distances, to which those, who had through inadvertance and without design killed any person, might betake themselves, and be secured from the resentment of the relation of the deceased. But God chose that this privilege should depend on two conditions. The first was, not to come out of these cities during the life of the high priest; and the † second was, not to return to their own city and family till after his death; for it was lawful to kill them if they went out of their city sooner; and they were captives tho' in safety, and separated from their

* Numb. xxxv. 13, 15.

† Ibid. 26, 27, 28.

their family and their city, till the death of the high priest restored them to intire liberty.

Before we make the application of this admirable type, which so fully declares the death of the high priest who was to restore liberty and heritage to those who were exiles and captives, it will be expedient to prepare the reader for it by two observations.

The first is, That the law not being able to pardon sins, it could only mitigate and favour such as were involuntary, all others being without remission punished by death.

The second is, That original sin, which has shut the gates of heaven against all men, does, if we only consider the posterity of Adam, bear a great resemblance to the misfortune of those who kill a person without intending it.

Nevertheless this sin, voluntary in the action of the father, tho' involuntary in its fatal consequences, has condemned the most righteous to descend after death into subterraneous sanctuaries, where they were in safety, though captives and exiles from their native country. It was not permitted to them to come out of these places of security before the death of the high priest, * by way of eminence whose unction was infinitely superior to that which had typified it; and they would have remained in these places of confinement for ever, if he himself had not descended thither to set them at liberty.

But since he was to set them at liberty, it was requisite he himself should not be retained as a captive there. It was necessary that he should vanquish death and the king of terrors, to deliver those who were in their prisons; and he would have become their prey, if he had died without rising again.

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* Numb. xxxv. 23.

A R T. V.

FIFTEENTH FIGURE.

The ancient covenant sealed by the blood of animals.

IT is not to be doubted * but the covenant which God made with the children of Israel on mount Sinai was provisional, subject to be revoked, and only destined to be a type of another covenant. We have elsewhere shewn the truth of this, so that we may for the future suppose this point to be demonstrated.

This covenant nevertheless †, which was only established for a time, and was even broken by the idolatry of the golden calf a few days after it was made, was sealed by the blood of victims. Moses shed a part of it on the altar which represented the majesty and presence of God: and he poured the other part on twelve pillars, which represented the twelve tribes, and in pouring this last part out he pronounced these words; "This is the blood of the covenant which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words."

Why did God exact this ceremony? Had a covenant, into which he was willing to enter with men, any need to be attested by the blood of victims? and can we compare it with the treaties which men have sometimes entered into with their fellow creatures, of which they render God the witness and the guarantee, by offering up sacrifices to him, and supplicating him to avenge on the infringers or transgressors the contempt of so august a ceremony, and to put them in the place of the victims whose blood had been shed in his presence.

Such a sense cannot be given to the sacrifices, the blood of which ratifies a covenant in which God himself is one of the contracting parties; for that blood is shed equally on the altar and the people. It is the seal of the mutual conditions and reciprocal engagements;

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* See the whole 12th chapter.

† Exod. xxiv. 4, 6, 8.

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and it would be as absurd as impious to believe that God would submit to the same trouble with the people, if on his side he was wanting in the fulfilment of his promises.

The sacrifice then and the blood of victims must have been on the side of the people an expiation, and on God's side a testimony that he was satisfied with it; and that in consequence of this blood he consented to enter into a covenant with a people who, without this ceremony, would have been unworthy of it.

Now if a covenant which could of itself only put men in mind of their unrighteousness and impotence to save themselves, and which for that reason was imperfect, must be preceded by a victim: if a covenant, which was only to last as long as the types and shadows of future good things and righteousness, was to be merited by the immolation of some sacrifices, and ratified by their blood; how can we pretend, that the new covenant * (which sincerely reconciles men to God, which abolishes their sins, and writes in their hearts the law that had only been wrote on stone, which re-establishes them in an eternal inheritance, and makes them enter into an immediate society with God) has no need of a Mediator, a sacrifice, and the effusion of blood †? how should men, upon becoming more unrighteous by prevarication and perjury, appease the divine justice, which could not admit them into the first covenant till they were sprinkled with the blood of victims: how could the sentences pronounced against them be changed? or how could the covenant be ratified, unless a new Moses pronounced these words; "This is the blood of the new covenant which God makes with you;" and unless he sprinkled this precious blood on the altar and on the people?

It would be in vain to seek for another Mediator and another sacrifice than the Messiah, for whom the new covenant is reserved, and still more useless to seek for

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* Jerem. xxxi. 32, 33, &c.

† It was therefore necessary that the patterns in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. Heb. ix. 23,

another Messiah than Christ, who offered himself to his Father as a sacrifice, not only pure and holy, but also capable of purifying and sanctifying sinners; who has first sprinkled with his blood the altar on which he was immolated, and who has afterwards rendered the aspersions of it general; who by his death has ratified a covenant, which was also a testament, whose validity and fulfilment depended on the death of the Testator; and who being dumb on the cross as the lamb which had typified him, and inclining to conceal the freeness of his sacrifice under the appearance of violence and necessity, had anticipated the mystery of it in presence of his disciples, by telling them, "This is my blood which shall be shed for you and for many, even the blood of the new covenant or testament."

A R T. VI.

How strong and satisfactory the proof drawn from the foregoing type is.

IT would be easy to add new types to those which we have applied to Christ, and which have been shewn clear predictions of his death, and, by a necessary consequence, of his resurrection. But those we have mentioned are sufficient to demonstrate that the Messiah was to suffer, and to be offered as a sacrifice; and that Christ, who has so worthily fulfilled all these types and figures in dying for the salvation of man, is certainly the promised Messiah, and was typified from the beginning of the world.

They are not some faint scattered features, collected and aggrouped with study and art, that have formed the figures or pictures in which Christ is so remarkably seen. It is not from an ambiguous prophecy, capable of different interpretations, that we conclude the necessity of his sacrifice and death. It is not from a single passage of scripture, a single circumstance of his history, a single ceremony prescribed by the law, or a single sacrifice ordered by it, that the conformity of Christ with that which typifies him has been drawn. The whole plan
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of the scripture is a proof of it. The whole of it is his history, and presents models or images of him. The whole order of the sacrifices, the whole disposition of the tabernacle, the whole ministry of the priesthood, and even the foundation of the first covenant, furnish the types and predictions of him.

We find, in studying these types with care, that they all concur in the same design and object, that they have a necessary relation to it, which commands attention instead of being the effect of it: that they afford mutual light and evidence to each other; that one compleats what another had begun; that one corrects what has been defective in another: and that each in particular declaring the death of the Messiah, which is their general character, all of them conspire to re-unite the causes, motives, effects, and circumstances of a mystery, which may in a true sense be called the only object of the scriptures. Thus I am not afraid to affirm, that this kind of proof must, upon a serious mind, make a more deep and lively impression than any particular demonstration.

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TREATISE

of the PRINCIPLES of the
CHRISTIAN FAITH.

PART II.

Proofs of the principles of the christian religion,
drawn from the books of the Old Testament.

CHAP. I.

A recapitulation and abridgment of the principal truths established in the preceding part. Abridgment of the essential points down to the promise of the Messiah. Abridgment of the proofs, that the promised Messiah is come. Abridgment of the proofs that Jesus Christ is the promised Messiah. Proof drawn from the incredulity of the Jews. What has contributed most to blind the Jews, and conceal Jesus Christ from their knowledge, ought to have been the very means of his manifestation.

THE design of this third part is not the same with that of the foregoing. The truth of religion, and in particular the christian, is already demonstrated. I seek no further, because I have found all

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all I desire; and if I continue the examination, it is rather to have a more perfect knowledge of the treasures I already possess, and be more convinced of their value, than to acquire them.

A R T. I.

An abridgment of the most essential points, down to the promise of the Messiah.

WHEN first I applied myself to find out the proofs of a deity, they presented themselves to me of all kinds, and in abundance from all sides. It was impossible to be ignorant, that man must have certain duties in relation to God; and equally impossible to know them all by reason, and the mere light of nature. These duties I could not learn with absolute certainty from other men; hence it appeared to me incontestable, that God himself must have revealed his will to mankind.

I was therefore under no necessity of examining any of those religions which are not founded on divine revelation: and it was not difficult for me to distinguish the true revelation; because it is but one, and entrusted to one people. I comprehended, that the scriptures must be absolutely as pure and divine, as the very revelation they contain; because they are its depositary and channel; wherefore their preservation appeared as certain to me as their origin.

In reading them, I was struck with their antiquity; for they are the most antient monuments in the universe. I was also surprized at the exact knowledge they gave me of other nations, which have no insight into their origin, but what they have received from thence; and at the light they afforded me in regard of certain traditions, common to all people, which have begun and ended at those periods of time marked in the scriptures.

The certainty of the miracles wrought by Moses, attests clearly his mission, and gives a divine authority to his writings. From the other miracles wrought in the times

times of Joshua, Elias, and Isaiah, equally certain with the former, they derive a new degree of light and strength. And I have observed, that as there is an essential connection betwixt the books of scripture, which all refer to one another; so is there an essential dependence betwixt all the miraculous facts that authorize them, and prove their divinity.

But nothing made a greater impression on me than the prophecies. I perceived the event always verified their truth; that those which regarded a distant time, were justified by others which had their accomplishment during the lives of the prophets, and of such as survived them: and that we had very good reason to believe, that others, whose event was deferred, would as certainly be fulfilled. I was convinced by my own inquiries, in examining the prophecies of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel, which are the most extensive and celebrated: and had I no other proof of the divine inspiration of the holy scriptures, this alone would suffice me.

I have read them with care, and methinks, I may reduce them to three heads: to the decalogue, which contains the immutable principles of morality, and to all the particular laws, which explain it, and demonstrate its use and extent; to the public worship, as prescribed by the law of Moses; and to the promise of the Messiah.

In the decalogue, I admired with what clearness and precision the law of nature is abridged, and renewed. So short and yet so full a law, visibly bears the stamp of the supreme legislator: and I discover this truth by two marks; namely the command of loving God with all our heart, and adoring him alone; and by the prohibition of consenting to any unjust desire: for in two words, he has established the foundation of all virtues, and cut away the root of every vice.

As for the external worship prescribed by Moses, which consists in ceremonies and sacrifices, and several arbitrary observances, I was fully convinced; that it has no necessary connexion with religion, nor was it ever intended as a perpetual establishment; that it was

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not the chief design of God, even in regard of the Jews ; but was to cease when true justice should be revealed ; and therefore was not to subsist any longer than till the coming of the Messiah.

A R T. II.

Abridgment of the proofs, that the Messiah is come.

THE Messiah is therefore the grand object of the scriptures. The most ancient prophecy is that which regards him. He was prophesied to the first man after his fall ; and this promise was renewed to Abraham, fixed to the tribe of Judah, and afterwards to the house of David. The last prophet ends his writings by renewing it, and thus joins the beginning to the end.

The revelation of the promise of a Messiah, which includes also that of the condemnation of mankind, is manifestly divine : and these two mysteries, which human reason was incapable of discovering, but the knowledge of which was necessary to religion, inspire me with a new reverence for the scriptures.

The only doubt I could have in regard of the prophecy concerning the Messiah, was to know if it was accomplished, or whether the accomplishment of it was still deferred. But the scriptures, which the Jews themselves have put into my hands, decide clearly in favour of the Christians.

They gave me on this head, signs, which cannot be equivocal, and of which the senses are unfit to judge. According to the prophecy of Jacob, the scepter, or the chief authority, was not to depart from Judah, till he that was to be sent was come : and this tribe was to subsist, and be governed in the form of a commonwealth, by its magistrates until that time. It is no longer a political body : it has no magistrates of its own : it is dispersed and confounded with the others : its present condition therefore is an evident mark, that he who was to be sent is already come.

Daniel

Daniel points out the precise time in which he was to come, and when the Holy of Holies was to put an end to sin, and give beginning to an everlasting justice. He fixes * the seventy weeks, on one side, at the edict of Artaxerxes for the rebuilding of Jerusalem, which was accomplished by Nehemias; and, on the other, at the death of the Messiah, and the establishment of his church. The two points of this duration are therefore known, and one determines the other; the term at which commences a revolution of 490 years, shews me necessarily where it ends.

The prophets Haggai and Malachy, assure us, that the second temple shall subsist till the coming of the Messiah, that he will go thither in person, that he will preach peace therein, and that his presence will procure this temple a glory, which the other had not, tho' it was far richer and more magnificent. This second temple has been destroyed above sixteen centuries ago; it is therefore equally evident, that more than sixteen centuries are past since the Messiah came.

Besides these proofs drawn from matters of fact, independent of discussion and reasoning, the scriptures furnish me with many others as sensible and plain. The character it gives to the Messiah, as proper and peculiar to him, and by which he is to be known, is the conversion of the Gentiles. They are converted; he that was to convert them is therefore come.

A new covenant whereof the Messiah is to be the Mediator, will abolish the ancient. The ancient covenant I see abolished. I see that God has rendered its observance impossible, by driving the Jews from Judea and Jerusalem, and reducing to ashes the only temple and altar on which he made the whole public worship depend. It is therefore as impossible for me to doubt, that the Mediator of the new covenant is come, as to question those external facts, which prove, that the ancient covenant subsists no longer.

The only difficulty I could here meet with, is the prejudice,—that the promise of the Messiah having been

* These are weeks of years, as has been proved, which make four hundred and ninety years.

made to the Jews, it concerns them more than any other nation, to know whether it be accomplished; and since this people still expect the Messiah, it is not sure whether he be yet come.

But this appearance of reason has upon me a quite contrary effect: for this blindness of the Jews is clearly foretold by the prophets, who inform me both of the causes and consequences of this blindness, and give to the Messiah this double character, of being rejected by the greatest part of his nation, and of being adored by the Gentiles, to whom a select number of Jews, reserved by God's grace, are to preach him. Therefore it is because he has been rejected by the body of that nation, that I believe in him. I should not receive him, had he been received by that people.

As the blindness of the Jews is foretold, so is their punishment: and that punishment, of which I am a witness, is in my regard a new proof of their crime. I see this unhappy people banished from the inheritance of their fore-fathers, dispersed without prince, without priest, without temple, magistrates, or liberty, as the prophet Hosea foretold. I cannot therefore doubt, but they have been incredulous in regard to the Messiah, and so unhappy as not to know him, since their condition is entirely similar to that which, according to the prophets, was to be the punishment of their incredulity.

It is visible that the dispersion of the Jews has two principle motives: one to shew that the promise of a Messiah is accomplished; because the only nation to which it was made, a nation that was designed, as a religious state or society, to bear testimony of him, is no more a state or religious body: the other, to disperse thro' the whole world a proof that the Messiah was promised, and is now come, by carrying with them the prophecies which foretold him, and are now evidently fulfilled. For such prophecies, in the hands of enemies to christianity, cannot justly be suspected: and the divine providence, which has spread over the whole world witnesses who despose in favour of christians, contrary to their own will, cannot be sufficiently adored.

The same providence is no less visible in the preservation of the Jews, notwithstanding their dispersion, and the universal contempt into which they are fallen. No other people could possibly have subsisted so long, without any of those means which serve to unite men together: and even with all human means, no other people would have been able to preserve themselves, or avoid being confounded with other nations. The Jewish people alone, banished, dispersed, without protection, or sensible connexion, without magistrates, or temple, subsist to this day unmixed with others. Here the hand of God is manifest; and such a miraculous preservation has a visible relation to those prophecies which foretell, that the Jews will at length acknowledge the Messiah, whom their fore-fathers have rejected. They are dispersed, because they have not believed; and preserved, because they are to believe. Thus these two prodigies join with each other, to witness that the Messiah is come.

A. R. T. III.

Abridgment of the proofs, that Jesus Christ is the promised Messiah.

NOW since it is indubitable that the Messiah is come, who can hesitate to acknowledge Jesus Christ to be this Messiah? All I have hitherto seen in scripture, demonstrates this verity; and the application we ought to make, of what has been said, to Christ, is not only easy but necessary. The tribe of Judah, a little after his coming, lost that authority it had preserved to his time; it ceased to be governed by magistrates, and formed no longer a state or common-wealth.

Daniel's weeks finish at his coming; and the last, which is fruitful in mysteries, encloses in a narrow compass, his public ministry, his death and the establishment of his church, as the prophet had foretold.

He came, according to the prophecy of Haggai and Malachy, into the second temple built by Zorobabel. He preached in it often, and announced peace. He foretold

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foretold the ruin of it, to prove that the prophecy had received its accomplishment.

Who but he converted the Gentiles? and who but he sent his disciples over the whole world, to spread the knowledge of the true God, and overthrow idols?

The ancient covenant vanished, when he established the new; and no human power has hitherto been able to re-establish the temple and altar, whose sacrifices he abolished.

Some Israelites, enlightened by grace, have believed in him: all the others have been blinded, as the prophets had foretold.

Their blindness, and the faith of the Gentiles, are of the same date, and their dispersion followed soon after their blindness. It is therefore impossible to separate the person of Jesus Christ from the Messiah, since both are but one, and the same indivisible object of the prophecies; and Jesus Christ has always accomplished what the prophets foretold would be accomplished by the Messiah.

A R T. IV.

A proof drawn from the incredulity of the Jews.

I Am not ignorant of what the unbelieving Jew opposes to such clear and convincing arguments. The Messiah ought to be a King, says he, to extend his empire by conquest, to subject all nations, to fill Jerusalem with riches and spoils, and to crown the Jewish nation with power and glory. And you know, continues he, that Jesus Christ lived like a private person, that he and his disciples were poor, and that he made no attempt to rescue us from the Roman yoke; so far was he from subjecting to us all nations.

My design is not to cure Jewish blindness; this is a miracle reserved for another time. His blindness afflicts, but does not stagger me; it makes me search more diligently than he has done, into the true sense of scripture.

The sacred writings are mixed every where with clearness and obscurity, but especially when they foretell the reign of the Messiah; and this designed mixture is a consequence of God's resolution to discover, or conceal, the meaning of his promises, according to the dispositions of those who would love the reality, or take up with the outward appearance.

It was necessary a king should be promised, whom the people might desire, and a deliverer, whom the just might acknowledge. It was necessary to interest the whole nation in the scriptures which promised the Messiah, to render these scriptures dear to them, and to inspire the people with a zeal and confidence necessary for their publication: but the knowledge of them was to be reserved for those who understood the divine secret, and desired a Saviour, but not a conqueror. In effect, that which induced the people to expect him, is the very thing which has hindered their acknowledgement. But such a Messiah, as the people expected, would have been useless and dangerous, and I should have very little value for a conqueror, who had only flattered my vices.

The kingdom of the Messiah, according to the scriptures, is to be a kingdom of peace: and consequently, without those battles and victories, with which the Jews have filled their heads. He is to announce peace to all nations, instead of oppressing them. He will live the kings of the earth upon their thrones, and content himself with making them humble and faithful. He will have nothing in common with bad princes. He will fill Jerusalem with grace and justice, and not with external riches acquired by injustice and violence. He will be without pride, pomp, or splendor, without any resemblance of other kings. No human means will he employ to gain a kingdom. His reign will be everlasting; and it will not be till he has sat down at the right hand of his Father, that all his enemies shall be made his footstool.

All these marks are quite opposite to the idea the Jews have formed of the Messiah; but all agree exactly with Jesus Christ, and none but him. Thus, because the Messiah is to be a king, I acknowledge Jesus Christ for the Messiah; and it is precisely because he is not
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such a king as the Jews expect, that I revere him as the king foretold in scripture.

A R T. V.

That which has contributed most to blind the Jews, and to conceal Jesus Christ from their knowledge, ought to have been the very means of his manifestation.

THERE remains another difficulty, apparently more insurmountable than the former; and this consists in the scandal of the cross. The Jews cannot resolve to acknowledge for their king and the Messiah, a person whom they have crucified; and the belief of nations astonishes but does not convert them.

But what most contributes to the blindness of the Jews, and to conceal Jesus Christ from their knowledge, is that very thing by which they ought to have known him. For the death and ignominy of the Messiah are clearly foretold by the prophets, and in particular by Isaiah. He was to be nailed to the cross, and die upon it, according to the prophecy of David; who foretold likewise, that the patience of the Messiah would be considered as weakness, and his trust in God as vain. The Messiah was to be put to death by his own people, according to Daniel; and the whole nation was to weep, according to Zachary, for him they had pierced. He was to be the destruction of death itself by dying. He was to rise from the tomb without corruption. He was to deliver, by the effusion of his blood, the captives held in a subterraneous prison. He was to crush the serpent's head by the weakness and fragility of the flesh, figured by the bruised heel. He was to abolish all the ancient sacrifices, by offering up himself a pure holocaust.

He was to be elevated on high, like the brazen serpent, and be a restorer of health. He was to pray like Moses, and give victory, with extended arms. He was to make the tempest cease like Jonas, and be swallowed up by death, rise again the third day, and preach repentance with incredible success to the Gentiles. He

was to be hated by his brethren, like Joseph, sold and delivered up to the Gentiles, after descending into the tomb, and being from thence like him delivered. He was to nourish Egypt, and reign there, and to be the Saviour of that country, and afterwards of his own family.

He was to be sacrificed by his own Father, like Isaac; to rise again after his sacrifice, and become the Father of a numerous posterity after his death. He was like Abel, to be slain by Cain, for his virtue, and in hatred of the testimony he had from God. He was to be delivered of his own spouse in his sleep, and by the opening of his side, like Adam. He was to be slain like the paschal lamb, on the same day, and at the same hour; and none but those houses, which were sprinkled with his blood, were to be spared by the destroying angel.

He was to enter as high priest into the Sanctum Sanctorum upon the solemn day of expiation; and he was to rend the veil, that hindered the reconciliation of mankind, and their entrance into heaven; by suffering his flesh to be torn by torments, and the violence of them to be such, as to separate his soul from the body.

He was to bear, like the scape-goat, our sins into the wilderness. He was to be loaded with our maledictions, and to offer himself to the justice of his Father, to bear its full weight, and change it into mercy. He was to prepare, by his blood, a salutary bath for those who are infected with leprosy; and consent freely to his own death, that he might set us at liberty. He was to seal the new covenant with blood, a blood infinitely more precious than that with which the old covenant was sealed by Moses. He was to make a sprinkling over all the people, and thus make the testament, whereby we were to become his heirs, eternal and immutable. He was to substitute, in the place of those legal purifications, (incapable of themselves to purify those who put their trust in them) one only sacrifice, whose effect should be general and perpetual, and be always efficacious in proportion to the faith and hope of those, who from thence expect their justification.

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In fine, he was to deliver from the fear of death, and a long captivity, those who waited for the death of the high priest, and placed their refuge and safety in this expectation, and who could not be re-established in their possessions, and country, but by this means.

This is what the scriptures are full of; this is what we meet with in almost every page; they preach nothing so much as the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The scriptures would be unintelligible, were the Messiah to resemble the idea the Jews have formed of him; and it would be an unaccountable thing, that they should agree perfectly with Jesus Christ, whom the Holy Ghost never had thought of; and be so contrary to the Messiah, whom that blessed Spirit designed to foretel.

But after so strong, and clear a light, that pours in upon us on all sides from the holy scriptures, let us turn our consideration to what we have felt, and reflect a while upon our own riches.

CHAP

C H A P. II.

Important reflections upon the prophecies accomplished by Jesus Christ. If only one prophet had foretold all that Jesus Christ has done or suffered, the miracle would still be very great, and the proof divine. The miracle is far greater, because several prophets, separated by place, and time, have foretold what Jesus Christ has done, and suffered. By the accomplishment of the prophecies, all past, or future seducers, are convinced of imposture. This proof, founded on the accomplishment of prophecies, acquires daily new strength, and demonstrates more and more that Jesus Christ is the true Messiah.

A R T. I.

If only one prophet had foretold what Jesus Christ has done and suffered, the miracle would still be very great, and the proof divine.

IF only one prophet had promised mankind a Messiah on the part of God ; if he had punctually marked out the determined time when he was to appear, what he was to teach, to suffer, what kind of death he was to die of, how he should triumph over death by his resurrection, by what blindness the people, by whom he was expected, would refuse to believe in him, tho' they were a witness of his miracles ; with what readiness the Gentiles would receive him, tho' he was unknown to them ; and if this prophet had added, that the people of Israel should immediately be punished for their incredulity, by losing Jerusalem, the temple, and Judea, and, by a necessary consequence, their public worship ; if he had distinctly foretold their dispersion ; if he had assured us this dispersion should continue till they believed ; and if he had promised with the same assurance, that in spite of their dispersion, they should always continue a distinct people, discernible from all others : a prophecy so astonishing, so circumstanced, so connected, would be the most

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most wonderful thing in the world, and would have the most deserved, before its accomplishment, the attention of all mankind.

But if, after several ages since the prophecy, Jesus Christ had come in the manner predicted, if he had faithfully accomplished the prediction in all points, and every thing had exactly corresponded with what the prophet foresaw in futurity; what prodigy could be comparable to such a conformity betwixt Jesus Christ and the prophecy? and who could refuse looking upon such a prophet as divinely inspired, and Jesus Christ as the Messiah?

A R T. II.

The miracle is far greater, because several prophets, separated by time and place, have foretold what Jesus Christ has done and suffered.

BUT such a wonder and proof are infinitely inferior to the testimonies it has pleased God to give of the truth of the christian religion. It is not only one man who is commissioned by God to promise the Messiah. This promise began with the world, and was often renewed in after-ages. It was always the object and hope of saints, and became in time the hope of a whole people, chosen out from the rest to testify its certainty. The prophets during several ages have foretold, what the Messiah was to do, and suffer: some have mentioned particular circumstances and others have added new ones to them. His mysteries have occupied them all, but under different symbols and images: and tho' their principal object has been the same, they have all copied it by certain views, which do not perfectly represent it, except they be all united.

Thus from the beginning of the world, the Messiah has been promised and foretold; and his coming is the proper expectation of the whole world. All the prophets that speak of him, are separated in time and place, and yet they all follow a divine light, which reveals to them the only object with which God himself seems to have

have been occupied. Nothing therefore is more august or sublime, than such an object, which is the term and center of the whole revelation.

But this is what renders the character of the Messiah inimitable, and impossible to be usurped by any other. For what possibility is there, that any other but he whom God was to send, should know all that was foretold of him? how could he unite them all in his person? how put them into execution? by what light could he see into those obscurities, with which the prophecies are veiled? how could he ever reconcile the seeming contradictions? how could he ever have separated the reality of the mysteries from the veil that covers them? and tho' he had the power of imitating what is above the power of man, how could he ever have an adequate idea of what he was to attempt to imitate?

Here therefore the hand of God is manifest, and Jesus Christ is evidenced to be the Messiah. Since the beginning of the world, all the prophecies have been present to his mind; he separated them from what was foreign to them, and only served to cover them: he has united them all, tho' spread thro' several places. He has taken from them all that seemed contradictory, when not considered in respect to him; he has equally accomplished them in regard of what they contained, as well human as divine, and demonstrated himself the center and end of them all, by reducing them to unity in his own person.

A R T. III.

By the accomplishment of the prophecies, all seducers, whether past or future, are convinced of imposture.

BY the completion of the prophecies, which is the particular and incommunicable character of Jesus Christ, all seducers, whether past or future, are convinced of imposture: and it is very important to make this evident, by a series of short and plain arguments.

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There is but one Deliverer promised ; and to one only the scriptures bear testimony. Whosoever therefore has neither been promised nor foretold, can be nothing but an impostor : and whoever cannot ascend as high as the first promise, or grounds himself upon scriptures less ancient than those of the Jews, is convinced by that alone of imposture, either because he has no title, or only a false one.

All the prophets foretell what the Messiah is to do, and suffer ; there can therefore be no doubt betwixt him, who has done, and suffered, what the prophets foretold, and him who has had no knowledge of their predictions, or has not fulfilled them.

Amongst the predictions of the prophets, there are some which cannot be repeated, and are so annexed to certain times and places, that they cannot be imitated by a false Messiah. It was necessary, for instance, that the true Messiah should come into the world before the destruction of the second temple, because he was to teach there. It was necessary he should lay the foundations of his church in Jerusalem, because from the mountain of Sion, it was to be spread over the whole world. It was necessary the Jews should reject him before their dispersion, because it was to be the punishment of their wilful blindness. Necessary it was in fine, that the conversion of the Gentiles should be his work, or that of his disciples ; since it is by this visible mark that the prophets desire to know him.

Now the temple is no more : Jerusalem is possessed by strangers ; the Jews are dispersed, and the Gentiles converted. The Messiah is therefore come, this is clear : but it is not less clear that no one else can repeat the proofs he has given of his coming, and by consequence no one else can fulfill what the prophets foretold would be fulfilled by the Messiah.

A R T.

A R T. IV.

The proof founded upon the accomplishment of the prophecies, gains new force every day, and demonstrates more and more, that Jesus Christ is the Messiah.

THIS kind of proof has an invincible force, whose impression every one is capable of feeling; and by an admirable conduct of providence, this force, instead of weakening by length of time, continually increases. For the condition of Judea and Jerusalem, from whence the Jews are banished; their dispersion, which still continues; the conversion of the Gentiles, which is universal, and notorious; the preservation of the Jews, which miracle becomes daily more astonishing, and contrary to the ordinary course of natural things, and to the example of other people; that persevering expectation of a Messiah, which delay weakens not, and is evidently the end of providence in their preservation: all this continues in full force; acquiring every instant new strength: and Jesus Christ is at this day as clearly proved by these testimonies, which both Jews and Gentiles render him by their present condition, and even more forcibly, than by those first dispositions of providence, which degraded the Jews, and put the Gentiles in their place: because it is more above human, and any but divine power, to keep things during sixteen ages in a violent state, than to reduce them to this state for a while, by a transitory effort.

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C H A P. III.

Examination of those books which are peculiar to Christians, and which they consider as divine. The authors of these books peculiar to christians, were all contemporaries. No history was ever written by such a number of contemporary authors: they were all ocular witnesses, and had a share themselves in many things. First proof of their having been contemporaries, is their advancing nothing which can reasonably make us doubt of it. All historical facts, and circumstances, prove them to have been contemporaries. Their books have been quoted by authors contemporary with the apostles. The church has always carefully distinguished betwixt true and false scriptures. She never suffered the true ones to be adulterated. The church is older than the scriptures, and could receive no others, but such as were conformable to the doctrine of the apostles. The certainty of the scriptures founded on tradition; in what sense it is true, that were it not for the authority of the church, we should not believe the gospel.

A R T I.

The authors of those books which are peculiar to christians, were all contemporaries. No history has been written by such a great number of contemporaries.

IN continuing my inquiries, I am far from forgetting what I have discovered; but I design to conceal it, in some measure from myself for a time, in hopes of finding new proofs of those truths, of which I am already persuaded: for I cannot believe but the establishment of the christian religion, separate by itself, and independent of ancient prophecies, has something singular and divine: and that Jesus Christ has added to the proofs and testimonies the old testament gives of him; and to those with which the present state of the

Jews and Gentiles continues to furnish us, has added, I say, some evident signs, that he was the Deliverer promised from the beginning of the world.

With this view I read those books which are peculiar to Christians, and which they consider as divine; I am persuaded also of their divinity, and have made it my principal study. But to establish my faith, or strengthen that of my brethren, which perchance might waver, I am going to render an account to myself of the reflexions I have made for so long a time, by considering them at present as if they were new, and had been intirely unknown to me, before the examination I am going to make.

The books which Christianity puts into my hands, are of two sorts. The first contain the history of Jesus Christ, and the establishment of his church; the others are written by apostles, and addressed to particular churches, or to christians in general. The authors of both are, and have been always, well known, and are in number * eight.

The first observation which I make in reading them is, that they are contemporaries, that is, they all lived at the time those things which are mentioned in their writings happened. And I own I am extremely struck with such a circumstance, a circumstance not only extraordinary, but singular in every respect; no history, since the commencement of the world, having been written by an equal number of contemporary authors. We look upon several histories as very authentic, tho' there has not been transmitted to our times, any monument as ancient as those facts of which we are fully persuaded. The history of Alexander king of Macedon, and conqueror of Asia, is not attested by any contemporary author. The same may be said of the history of Augustus, Tiberius, and many others, which we cannot doubt of, tho' written by authors, who were not witnesses of the facts therein contained. And 'tis very rare, when the facts are ancient, to have well circumstantiated proofs of the same date and age.

A R T.

* The four evangelists, with St. Peter. St. Paul, St. James and St. Jude.

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A R T. II.

They were all ocular witnesses, and had a share in many things.

IN the second place, I observe, that not only the authors of these books were contemporaries, and that the things mentioned in their writings happened in their time, but that they themselves were * ocular witnesses of all; that they had a share in many things; that they were not only instructed in relation to the facts, but of their causes and motives; that they had all the same knowledge, and in the same degree, and that they agree in the same essential points, by giving an uniform testimony.

In vain should I seek for any thing of a similar nature in the whole universe. Contemporary authors themselves have seldom seen the facts they relate: they were not in the secret, nor of the council. They were often in a distant country from that wherein the event happened, whereof they were informed only by public reports, which are seldom faithful. And their want of exactness is almost always evident to those who undertake to compare the relations of different tho' contemporary writers.

If it happens that an author be at the same time both historian and witness, that he has accompanied the prince or general † whose actions he relates, that he has been his particular confidant, and had a share in his deliberations

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* St. Luke and St. Mark, who by some are supposed to have been the disciples of St. Paul and St. Peter, were, more probably, immediate disciples of Jesus Christ. St. Luke, who alone makes mention of the seventy two disciples, was one of the number, according to some ancient writers, and one of those who were going to Emmaus. And there is no reason I should distinguish St. Mark the evangelist, from Mark called John, or even Joseph, the fourth son of Mary, mother of James, Simon, Jude, and Joseph. What St. Luke relates, in the commencement of his gospel, relates only to the facts of which he could not have been a witness, and which he must have learnt only from the blessed virgin, and some others of the same time.

† As Polybius with respect to Scipio.

tions and councils, we set a high value upon his memoirs; and should look upon it as an injustice, and defect of discretion to call them in doubt, without solid proofs, tho' such a writer's testimony be single.

We value highly likewise histories written by princes, or generals *, who relate their own actions with an air of sincerity and modesty, which leaves an appearance of probability in their writings, tho' otherwise their testimony might naturally be suspected.

What must we then think of the joint witness of so many historians, who relate nothing but what they saw with their eyes, who were present at all the transactions, who heard each particular, and are themselves a great part of the history they write? Who can refuse to believe persons who write thus? *That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you: we preach unto you the sword of life, which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, and our hands have handled †.* And what rashness would it not be, to call in doubt what another of them says, to assure us of the truth of his testimony? *For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty ‡.*

There can be no historical certainty in this world, if a history written and attested by so many contemporary writers, writers so well instructed, and so exactly informed of every thing, be not absolutely certain. The christian religion, to examine no further than the number of its historians, and the age in which they wrote being contemporary with the facts they mention, has an evident advantage over all that is believed by men on human authority: for the facts upon which it is founded, are not only incontestable, but no other history, to speak even of the most indubitable, has proofs of equal certainty.

A R T.

* Xenophon's history of the retreat of the ten thousand Greeks. Cesar of the Gallic wars.

† 1 epist. St. John, i. 3.

‡ 2 epist. St. Peter, v. 16.

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A R T. III.

FIRST PROOF.

That they are contemporary writers, is, their advancing nothing that can make us doubt of it.

NOTHING, methinks, can be opposed to such a clear evidence, but the suspicion that perhaps the authors, whom we look upon as contemporary, and who give themselves out for such, are not so; that they lived in different times; and that they are the inventors, and not the ocular witnesses of what they relate.

Such a suspicion, were we to mind it, would attack equally the truth of all history. No author could be reputed contemporary; none faithful; none would deserve to be believed; and the more proofs he produced, that every thing was transacted with his certain knowledge, and that he had a great share therein, the more his exactness in proving it, would render him suspected.

But I will suppose for once, that such a suspicion, unreasonable as it is, deserves a serious answer; I have several to make, not only of a serious nature, but such as will not admit of a reply.

In the first place, the authors I examine, write nothing but what is conformable to the time in which they write, to the places, persons, customs; finally, to the civil government, state of religion, and public affairs, of which they make mention. They represent the situation of the Jews, and the power and dominion of the Romans, such as they were in fact; and always according to the degrees and changes that happened under the different princes who commanded in a part of Judea, and under the governors of Palestine and Syria for the Romans. Nothing drops from their pen that can be said to contradict the strictest probability, the truth of history, the computation of time, or any of those things in that age which are known to us by other means: now it is visible, such an exactness has not been the effect of precaution, but the consequence of simple truth; and it is because they always spoke it, that they have always

seemed to speak it. For critics in history know how difficult it is, nay impossible, to write a false history, and pretend to fix it to certain places and times, and to known persons, without falling into those inconveniencies which evidently discover the falsity, and which no fiction can avoid.

A R T. IV.

All historical facts and circumstances prove them to be contemporaries.

IN the second place, not only these authors have written nothing contrary to what contemporary authors should write, but all circumstances prove them invincibly to be such; they lived in the midst of Jerusalem; they prayed openly in the temple, and taught there; they were cited before the priests, and the council of the nation, for having cured a lame person, who was asking alms at one of the gates of the temple. St. Paul, a long time after, was cast into prison there, at the time he was preparing to offer one of the sacrifices prescribed by the laws. The temple was therefore in being, and Jerusalem in its splendor, when St. Luke wrote the acts of the apostles, which was not till after he had written his gospel, and consequently, a considerable time before Titus, who destroyed Jerusalem and burnt the temple.

The imprisonment and delivery of St. Peter suppose Herod living; that this prince was at variance with the Tyrians; that he granted them peace at the persuasion of one of his ministers, and that he was struck invisibly by the hand of God, while he was making a public speech. All these events are interwoven, and, as it is visible, without affectation or design.

St. Paul, while prisoner at Caesarea, is questioned by two Roman governors, who succeeded one another. He speaks before king Agrippa and Faelix in his own defence; and he is sent to Rome to be judged by Nero, to whom he had appealed: and the time when this happened, and in which it was written, is certainly known.

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The famine, which was to rage in the time of Claudius, was foretold by a prophet. * The Jews were driven from Rome, because of this famine; one of those exiled Jews retires to Corinth, and is known there by St. Paul: another time the same Jew returns with his family to Rome, and St. Paul † desires to be remembered to him, and thanks to be given him in his name. Nothing can be more simple, or less liable to suspicion, than facts of this nature; but they prove most convincingly, that St. Paul lived under the empire of Claudius; and we know that St. Luke, his historian, followed him in his peregrinations, and even to Rome.

We might make other observations of a like kind, if it were necessary; but whoever pleases to give himself the trouble, may add new ones, and convince himself by proofs of all kinds, that the authors of these christian books were certainly contemporary to the facts they mention.

A R T. V.

Their books have been quoted by authors contemporary with the apostles.

IN the third place, these books have been famous from the beginning, and cited by great men who were contemporary with the apostles, such as St. Ignatius, St. Clement, St. Polycarp; or contemporary with their disciples, such as St. Justin, and St. Irenaeus. These men have all spilt their blood to attest the truths and facts which these books contain. But this is not what I am now considering; I attend to nothing but to the testimony which these men give to the antiquity of the books we here examine. They must have read them, because they quote them; they believed the apostles and evangelists authors of them, since they ascribe them to those sacred writers. Of this they were sure, because they lived not only in their time, but with them. It is therefore just we should be satisfied they are their works: and we cannot refuse their testimony, except

* Acts xviii. 2.

† Rom. xvi. 3.

cept we have a mind to violate all the rules of natural equity and reason.

But if any one should require something farther, to convince him that these books are as ancient as they are said to be, and that the works which have been attributed to those authors, are not supposititious: other witnesses, very ancient and worthy of credit, cite the former, and justify, by their quotations, the truth of those works that have been transmitted down to us. St. Clement is cited by St. Irenaeus; St. Ignatius is quoted by the most ancient church historian, and other great men; and St. Polycarp has the same vouchers. Thus, by a chain of witnesses that strengthen one another's credit, we ascend to the times of the apostles, and their writings: and whatever is certain since their time, bears witness to their certainty.

A R T. VI.

The church has always carefully distinguished betwixt true and spurious scriptures.

IN the fourth place, if any thing is capable of adding to, and even of completing this certainty, 'tis that scrupulous distinction, the ancient christians always made between genuine † and supposititious scriptures; and the only solid and decisive principle on which they grounded this distinction. For on one side many heresies have endeavoured to avail themselves of scriptures attributed to the apostles, whose venerable names appeared at the head of those fictitious gospels, of which they were falsely supposed to be the authors. But on the other side, the christians who remained constant in the profession of the ancient traditions, opposed nothing to these innovations,

† Apocryphorum librorum, et adulterinarum scripturarum, quas ipsi confinxerunt, infinitam multitudinem asserunt, ut stultos ac vefanos homines, qui veritatem scripturarum ignorant, in stuporem trahant. Irenae. l. 1. c. 17. Nov. Ed. c. 20. which he refutes afterwards by the tradition of the churches, and particularly that of Rome, l. 3. c. 3.

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tions, but their evident novelty. " They have been, " said they *, unknown to us till this very time. They " were so to the apostles, whose names they bear ; none " of these ever gave them to any of the churches they " founded : no church ever received them from their " hands. There is not the least trace amongst us of " their

* Ego meum [evangelium] dico verum, Marcion suum. Ego Marcionis affirmo adulteratum, Marcion meum : quis inter nos determinabit, nisi temporis ratio ei praescribens auctoritatem, quod antiquius reperietur, et ei praepudicans vitiationem, quod posterius revincetur ? Tertull. l. 4. cont. Marc. c. 4.

In summa, si constat id verius quod prius, id prius quod et ab initio, id ab initio quod et ab apostolis : pariter utique constabit id esse ab apostolis traditum, quod apud ecclesias apostolorum fuerit sacrosanctum. Videamus quod lac à Paulo Corinthii hauserint : ad quam regulam Galatae sint recorrecti : quid legant Philipenses, Thessalonicenses, Ephesii : quid etiam Romani de proximo foverent, quibus evangelium et Petrus et Paulus sanguine quoque suo signatum reliquerunt. Habemus et Joannis alumnas Ecclesias, nam et si Apocalypsim ejus Marcion respuit, ordo tamen episcoporum ad originem recensus, in Joannem stabit auctorem. Sic et caeterarum generositas recognoscitur. Dico itaque apud illas, nec solas jam apostolicas, sed apud universas quae illis de societate sacramenti confœderantur, id evangelium ab initio editionis suae stare quod eum maxime tuemur : *Marcionis vero plerisque nec notum : nullis autem notum et non eo damnatum.* That is to say, for that very reason because it was particular to Marcion. Idem l. dict. c. 3.

His fere compendiis utimur, eum de evangelii fide adversus hæreticos experimur, defendentibus et temporum ordinem posteritati falsariorum praescribentem, et auctoritatem ecclesiarum traditioni apostolorum patrocinantem. Quia veritas falsum praecedat necesse est. Idem, ibid.

Adeo antiquius Marcione est [evangelium] quod est secundum nos, ut et ipse illi Marcion aliquando crediderit. Idem, l. dict. c. 4.

Distincta est à posteriorum libris excellentia canonicae auctoritatis veteris et novi testamenti, quae apostolorum confirmata temporibus per successiones episcoporum, et propagationes ecclesiarum, tanquam in sede quadam sublimiter constituta est cui serviat omnis fidelis et pius intellectus. S. Aug. cont. Faust. l. 11. c. 5.

Huic [Manichæo] vos de Christo quare credidistis ? (*he called himself the apostle of Jesus Christ*) quemnam testem vobis sui apostolatus adduxit ? --- An apostolos nostros pro se testes vocabit ? non, opinor,

“ their assumed antiquity ; no one ever quoted them ;
 “ no one ever undertook to explain them in our assem-
 “ bles ; they are all posterior in time to the establish-
 “ ment of truth, and all of the same date with the er-
 “ rors they favour ; none of them had a being till after
 “ the death of the apostles, and we have no occasion to
 “ examine false monuments, whose forgery is as clear
 “ as their novelty.”

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opinor, homines producet, sed libros aperiet---quod si eos infalsa-
 tos dixerit, ipse testium suorum fidem oppugnabit: si autem alios,
 quos dicat apostolorum nostrorum, codices protulerit, quomodo
 eis ipse auctoritatem dabit, quam per ecclesias Christi ab ipsis apos-
 tolis constitutas non accepit, ut inde ad posteros firmata commen-
 datione transcurreret. Idem l. 13. contr. Faust. c. 4.

Cum caepero Matthaei evangelium recitare, ubi narratio nati-
 vitatis [Jesu] contextitur ; continuo dices illam narrationem non
 esse Matthaei, quam Matthaei esse dicet universa ecclesia ab apo-
 stolicis sedibus usque ad presentes episcopos certa successione per-
 ducta. Tu mihi quid contra-lecturus es? Aliquem forte librum
 Manichaei, ubi Jesus negatur esse natus ex virgine. Sicut ergo
 ego credo illum librum esse Manichaei, quoniam ex ipso tempore
 quo Manichaeus vivebat in carne, per discipulos ejus certa suc-
 cessione praepositorum vestrorum ad nostra usque tempora custodi-
 tus atque perductus est: sic et istum librum credite esse Matthaei,
 quem ex illo tempore quo Matthaeus ipse in carne vixit, non in-
 terrupta serie temporum ecclesia certa connexionis successione us-
 que ad tempora ista perduxit. Idem l. 28. contra Faust. c. 2.

Et dic mihi cujus libro potius credere debemus, ejusne aposto-
 li, qui Christo, cum adhuc in terra esset, adhaeserat, an nescio
 cujus Persae, qui tanto post natus est? Sed alium forte proferes
 librum, qui nomen habeat alicujus apostoli, quem a Christo con-
 stat electum: et ibi Christum natum ex Maria non esse lecturus
 es. Cum ergo necesse sit alterum horum librorum esse menda-
 cem, cui nos potius censeres fidem accommodare debere? eine,
 quem illa ecclesia ab ipso Christo inchoata, et per apostolos pro-
 vecta, certa successionum serie, usque ad haec tempora, toto ter-
 rarum orbe dilatata; ab initio traditum et conservatum agnoscit:
 an ei, quem eadem ecclesia incognitum reprobatur. Idem, ibid.

Quod autem putat quaerendum esse Faustus quid de se Jesus ipse
 praedicaverit, cui non justum videatur? sed numquid hoc scire po-
 test nisi discipulis ejus narrantibus? Quibus si non creditur annun-
 ciantibus quod de virgine natus sit, quomodo eis fides adhibebitur
 annunciantibus quid de se ipse praedicaverit? Si enim prolatae fue-
 rint aliquae literae, quae nullo alio narrante ipsius propriae Christi
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It is thus all fictions have been rejected. This invincible strength of an argument drawn from prescription, has demolished all those writings that are of a later date than the times of the apostles, and the first origin of the church. None were ever received without knowing upon what grounds they were to be received: and the only rule on this important point, was the certainty that they came from the apostles.

This proof becomes a double demonstration, that the scriptures are truly written by the apostles, and that the apostles really lived in those times, when the things they mention happened. For the heresies of Cerinthus, Marcion, Valentinus, and some others, who dared to alter the purity of the scriptures, either by adulterating them in some places, as I shall hereafter shew, or by substituting new ones in their room, are very ancient, and bordering on the times of the apostles themselves. Wherefore, since in so remote a period of antiquity, they

rentur, non acciperentur, non praecipuo culmine auctoritatis eminent in ejus ecclesia, quae ab ipso per apostolos succedentibus sibi met episcopis usque ad haec tempora propagata dilatatur? Quis est ergo tam demens, qui hodie credat esse epistolam Christi quam protulerit Manichaeus, et non credat facta vel dicta esse Christi, quae scripsit Matthaeus? Idem l. 28. contra Faustum. c. 4.

Aut si etiam de Matthaeo utrum ipse ista scripserit dubitat, de ipso quoque Matthaeo non potius id credat quod invenit in ecclesia quae ab ipsius Matthaei temporibus usque ad hoc tempus certa successionum serie declaratur, ut credat nescio cui ex transverso de Perside post ducentos vel amplius annos venienti, et suadenti, ut illi potius quod Christus dixerit, feceritque credatur? Ibid.

De apocryphis iste ponit testimonia quae sub nominibus apostolorum Andreae, Joannisque conscripta sunt: quae, si illorum essent, recepta essent ab ecclesia, quae ab illorum temporibus per episcoporum successiones certissimas, usque ad nostra deinceps tempora perseverat. S. Aug. l. 1. contra adversarium legis et prophetarum. c. 20.

Legunt scripturas apocryphas Manichaei, à nescio quibus sutoribus fabularum sub apostolorum nomine scriptas, quae suorum scriptorum temporibus in auctoritatem sanctae ecclesiae recipi mererentur, si sancti et docti homines qui tunc in hac vita erant, et examinare talia poterant, eos vera locutos esse cognoscerent. Lib. 22. cont. Faust. c. 39.

they were yet looked upon as novel, and later than all the true writings of the apostles, or the establishment of the church; it is absolutely evident, that the scriptures are as old as the apostles, and that the apostles were contemporary with Jesus Christ.

A R T. VII.

The church never suffered the true scriptures to be adulterated.

IN the fifth place, the precaution which the ancient christians took to receive nothing as scripture, but from the hands of the apostles, and the first founders of the church, * made them extremely attentive to the least alterations, which heretics endeavoured to introduce. They rejected them all, and proved their spuriousness, by comparing ancient copies, common to all churches, with those that were adulterated and more recent, and which none but the very sects that had falsified them, considered as genuine †. The Valentinians the Marcionites,

* Cum ex scripturis [haeretici] arguuntur, in accusationem convertuntur ipsarum scripturarum quasi non recte habeant, neque sint ex auctoritate. Irenae, l. 3. c. 2.

† Quotidie reformant illud [suum evangelium Marcionitae] prout à nobis quotidie revincuntur. Tertull. l. 4. con. Marcion. c. 5. p. 501.

Evangelium interpolando [Marcion] suum fecit. Tertull. l. 4. cont. Marcion. c. 1. p. 501.

Humanae temeritatis, non divinae auctoritatis, negotium est haeresis, quae sic semper emendat evangelia, dum vitiat; — itaque dum emendat, utrumque confirmat: et nostrum antierius, id emendans quod invenit, et id posterius, quod de nostri emendatione constituens, suum et novum fecit. Idem, l. 4. c. 4. p. 505.

Hoc, quod adversus impietatem vestram ex apostoli Pauli epistola profertur, omnes codices et novi, et veteres habent, omnes ecclesiae legunt, omnes linguae consentiunt. S. Aug. l. 11. cont. Faust. c. 2.

Unum eorum [of two passages which Faustus judged contradictory] non esse Pauli, nullo modo possumus dicere, quia in eo nulla variat codicum auctoritas. Idem, ibid. c. 4.

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nites, the Gnostics, the Manicheans used this base artifice to destroy the proofs of those truths they designed to oppose, by suppressing certain passages of holy scripture, or adding something to them, the better to establish their errors. But the christians always exposed this double imposture, only by shewing copies of a more antient date than the forgery; and then continued resolute, in

VOL. I.

B b

admitting

Nihil mihi videtur ab eis impudentius dici, vel, ut mitius loquar, incuriosius et imbecillius, quam scripturas divinas esse corruptas: cum id nullis in tam recenti memoria extantibus exemplaribus possint convincere. Aug. lib. de utilitate credendi, c. 3. n. 7.

Aperte dicite non vos credere Christi evangelio: nam qui in evangelio quod vultis creditis, quod vultis non creditis, vobis potius quam evangelio creditis. Cont. Faust. l. 17. c. 3.

In praecipitium vos caeci mittitis, dicentes falsâ esse in evangelio; sic ubi vestra haeresis exitum non invenerit. Ut vobis nihil remaneat quo redire possitis unde Christo credatis, ubi vobis haec vox pestilentiae non possit opponi. Cont. Faust. l. 16. c. 33.

Quae jam auctoritas literarum aperiri, quis facer liber evolvi, quod documentum cujuslibet scripturae ad convincendos errores vestros exire potest, si haec vox admittitur, si alicujus ponderis estimatur? Aliud est ipsos libros non accipere, et nullo eorum vinculo detineri, quod Pagani de omnibus libris nostris, quod Judaei de Novo Testamento faciunt, quod denique nos ipsi de vestris et aliorum haeticorum si quos suos et proprios habent,—aliud est ergo auctoritate aliquorum, vel librorum vel hominum non teneri, et aliud est dicere: iste quidem vir sanctus omnia vera scripsit, et ista epistola ipsius est: sed in ea ipsa hoc ejus est, hoc non est ejus. Ubi eum ex adverso audieris: proba; non confugas ad exemplaria veriora vel plurium codicum, vel antiquiorum, vel linguae praecedentis, unde hoc in aliam linguam interpretatum est: sed dicas: inde probo hoc illius esse, illud non esse, quia hoc pro me sonat, illud contra me. Tu es ergo regula veritatis? Quidquid contra te fuerit, non est verum? Quid si alius simili insaniam, sed tamen quâ tua duritia confringatur, existat et dicat: imo id quod pro te sonat, falsum est; hoc autem falsum est; hoc autem quod contra te est, verum est; quid acturus, nisi forte alium librum prolaturus, ubi quicquid legeris secundum tuam sententiam possit intelligi? Hoc si feceris, non de aliqua ejus particula, sed de toto audies contradicentem et clamantem; falsus est. Quid ages? quo te converteres? quam libri à te prolati originem, quam vetustatem, quam seriem successionis testem citabis; nam si hoc facere conaberis, et nihil valebis. Et vides in hac re quid ecclesiae

admitting nothing that was new, and of retrenching nothing that was ancient; because they did not think they had any authority to do either, and looked upon the holy scriptures as a sacred and inviolable depositum; and having received this depositum by a tradition as high as the apostles, they were obliged to preserve this tradition uninterrupted and to trace thereby the source of divine revelation.

A R T.

ecclesiae catholicae valeat auctoritas, quae ab ipsis fundatissimis sedibus apostolorum usque ad hodiernum diem succedentium sibi met episcoporum serie et tot populorum consensione firmatur. Lib. 11. cont. Faust. c. 2.

Volo mihi ostendas, unde auctorem veritatis didiceris Christum, si eis, qui de illo scripserunt, quorum auctoritas recenti memoria commendata atque firmata in posteros emanavit, audes adscribere falsitatem? non enim vidisti Christum; aut quemadmodum cum apostolis, locutus est tecum, aut de coelo te, sicut Saulum vocavit. Cont. Faust. l. 16. c. 11.

Eadem auctoritas ecclesiarum apostolicarum caeteris quoque patrociniabitur evangeliiis [*the Marcionites acknowledged none but that of St. Luke, and even that with their alterations*] quae proinde per illas, et secundum illas habemus, Joannis dico, et Matthaei, [licet et Marcus quod edidit Petri affirmetur, cujus interpres Marcus]—itaque et de his Marcion flagitandus, quid, omisis eis, Lucae potius insliterit: quasi non et haec apud ecclesias à primordio fuerint, quemadmodum et Lucae?—Igitur dum constat haec quoque apud ecclesias fuisse, cur non haec quoque Marcion attigit, aut emendanda si adulterata, aut agnoscenda si integra? Tertull. l. 4. cont. Marc. c. 5. p. 505.

Aut proba esse quod credis; aut si non probas, quomodo credis? aut qualis es, adversus eum credens, a quo solo probatur esse quod credis. Tertull. l. 5. cont. Marc. c. 1. p. 576.

* Ipse auctus, si non et cum qui pareret, et contra Fau-

A R T. VIII.

The church is more ancient than the scriptures, and could not receive any but such as were conformable to the doctrine of the apostles.

IN the sixth place, the christian religion did not begin with the scriptures; and it does not seem possible in the nature of things, that any religion, true or false, should owe its beginning to a book of which the public had no previous knowledge. Jesus Christ was born, and died, before the gospel was written; he had disciples, and instructed them, before those disciples taught others; and the essential points of their doctrine which they preached, were determined and received as certain, before they were committed to writing.

By a necessary consequence, it was proper there should be an absolute conformity betwixt those truths delivered by word of mouth, and written verities *, since they were the same in the main, and the difference could be only in the manner, that is, between speaking, and writing. Otherwise people must have read in the scriptures new and unheard of things; they must have read the contrary to what they had heard from the apostles; and if the apostles had inserted in their writings what they dared not teach by word of mouth, the public would not have failed to have opposed their discourses to their writings, and consequently to suspect both, and be diffident of such teachers.

By another as necessary consequence, all the facts attested by the writings of the apostles, must have been already known to all christians, and looked upon as certain; since their writings were not received but inasmuch as they were agreeable to the doctrine established by predication.

B b 2

By

* Ipse apostolus Paulus, post ascensionem domini de coelo vocatus, si non inveniret in carne apostolos, quibus communicando, et cum quibus conferendo, evangelium ejusdem societatis esse appareret, ecclesia ille omnino non crederet. S. August. lib. 28. contra Faustum. c. 4.

By a final consequence, † it was impossible that any writing contrary to the doctrines of the apostles, and disowned by them, should acquire in their time a public authority amongst christians; and it is upon this the maxim of S. Augustin (a maxim however not particular to that father) is founded, that were it not for the authority of the church, he would not believe in the gospel.

CHAP. IV.

Proofs that the christian scriptures have nothing but what is true in them; and that their authors were sincere. General proofs of the sincerity of the evangelists and apostles. Particular proofs. Acknowledgment of their illiterateness and meekness of their first employments. Acknowledgment of their faults and weaknesses. They all agree in what is essential; but this conformity was not concerted. The truth of the main point proved by some contradictions.

ART. I.

General proofs of the sincerity of the evangelists and apostles.

NO longer am I permitted to doubt, but that the authors of those books which the christians look upon as divine, lived at the very time that those things they mention were transacted, that they themselves were spectators, and eye-witnesses, and had no small share in them. The proofs I have of this are unanswerable; and the testimony of all christians spread over the whole world, supported by the constant tradition of all ages, and by authors as ancient as the apostles, adds to these proofs a degree of certainty, sufficient to convince any reasonable mind; especially, when one considers with what

† Ego evangelio non crederem, nisi me ecclesiae catholicae commoveret auctoritas, S. Aug. l. 1. cont. Epam. Manich. quam vocant fundamenti, c. 5.

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what severity all that was not of the earliest antiquity has been rejected by christians ; with what fidelity the depositum of the evangelists and apostles has been preserved ; and with what facility they could compare the written doctrine with that which had been preached to them, and which being more ancient, served them as a rule to judge of the other.

Here I might stop and finish my enquiries : for if the christian books were written by sincere and well informed men : if they were always held in veneration by such as received them from their hands : if * they looked upon them as divine, and did not even refuse to lay down their lives, not only for their verity, but likewise, that they might not be delivered up to those who had a mind to suppress them : if this be so, I say, the whole christian religion is proved, and the certainty of each mystery is contained in the certainty of the general revelation.

But there are so many other things which convince me of the sincerity of the authors, as well as of the verity of the writings I am examining, and which are capable of making a like impression upon others, that it is my duty to stir up their attention.

A R T. II.

Particular proofs. Acknowledgment of their illiterateness, and the meanness of their first employments.

THE first thing which particularly strikes me, is the sincere acknowledgment which the apostles make that their first employment was that of simple fishermen ; that † they only knew the lake upon which they had their bark and nets ; that they were without letters, education, or any preparation for the office they were employed in ; and by consequence, that they had not had any commerce with learned and ingenious men, either in regard of political affairs, or religion. That one of them

B b 3

had

* Qui sunt libri quos legitis adurentes. Act. Mart. Scillitanorum.

† “ And perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men. Acts. ivi 13.

had even exercised an employment odious to the Jewish nation, having been a publican, and entered without any preparatory interval upon the apostleship. And what astonishes me more is, that it is this publican, become apostle, who is willing that all who read his gospel should know what he was.

Is it in the common order of nature to do so? Was it not, on the contrary, seemingly advantageous to religion, that those who were intrusted with teaching the whole world, should cover their first ignorance, and dissemble the meanness of their birth and employment? Was the acknowledging so openly their primitive ignorance and rusticity, a probable method of gaining the attention of the doctors of the law, or the priests, full of contempt for those who were without erudition? Could they ever hope to subject the heathen sages and philosophers, by declaring themselves fishermen and publicans? And if in the first beginning, when all was yet doubtful, a remainder of sincerity inclined the apostles not to deny their first original, why did they afterwards affect to inform all ages, after they had seen the success of their preaching, after they had raised the admiration of Jews and Gentiles, and had converted to the gospel * both priests and philosophers? Such sincerity, in such circumstances, must come from a supernatural principle. And I am much more inclined to believe men, whom success blinds not, who remember their ignorance and meanness, when they are become the light of others, and who use precautions that their first condition be never forgotten.

A R T. III.

Acknowledgment of their faults and weaknesses.

BUT it is still more above human reason and worldly wisdom, to render our own faults public, and to eternize the memory of our weakness, than not to dissemble

* “ And a great company of the priests were obedient to the
“ faith.” Acts. vi. 7.

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|| Luke

dissemble the meanness of our conditions and employments. There is nothing more opposite to the spirit of the gospel, than pride and ambition; and yet the apostles, those preachers of humility, speak very often of the love they had for distinctions and preference *, notwithstanding the lessons and examples of their master. They mention those who asked the two first places, and they acknowledge that the others conceived a jealousy of it; nay, they give us to understand, that even to the last moments of the life of Jesus Christ, ambition caused amongst them disputes and contestations.

They confess their want of faith on several occasions, and particularly in one wherein their incredulity was an obstacle to their freeing a possessed person †. They acknowledge, that the greatest, and almost palpable, miracles, such as the two famous multiplications of loaves in the desert, made little impression on them ‡, and that Jesus Christ reproached them with having eyes and ears, and not the use of them, and that they neither had reflexion nor understanding. They own they had no knowledge of true justice, and that they made it depend upon an external purity of hands and body; that they comprehended nothing in the predictions of Jesus Christ, which he made concerning his humiliations, his death and resurrection, because they comprehended nothing about his kingdom, or the means of its establishment: and after three years of instruction, they were without any light in all || those essential points.

They relate with ingenuousness, that they had all of them been presumptuous, by promising Jesus Christ to follow him to death, and yet they were all cowardly enough to abandon him. They mention, in an astonishing manner, the three several denials of St. Peter, without omitting any thing that might render his presumption and

* "And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest." Luke xxii. 24.

† "The disciples said, why could not we cast him out? And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief." Matt, xvii. 19, 20.

‡ Mark viii. 17, 18.

|| Luke xviii. 34.

and perjury inexcusable. They say of him, that on an important occasion, he was called Satan by Jesus Christ *, and treated as a scandalous and carnal man, who comprehended nothing in the ways of God. And in relating the words of the same apostle, which put a kind of equality betwixt Jesus Christ, Moses, and Elias, they add, that he knew not what he said.

Can one be diffident of the sincerity of those who give such convincing proofs of it? is there any example amongst mankind of a like nature? And what historian has ever mixt the history of his own ignorance, weakness, or meanness, with those facts he transmitted to posterity?

Such an ingenious proceeding would astonish me less, if the recital of the actions of Jesus Christ was necessarily related with the faults of his disciples: but they are all, except the treason of Judas, quite detached from them: and we should not have a less knowledge of the miracles, the contradictions, and reproaches from the Jews, and the ignominious death of Christ, had all which regards the weaknesses of his disciples, been omitted. There is therefore certainly something supernatural in a sincerity so contrary to the views of human wisdom, to the sentiments of a worldly heart, or even to the desire of edifying others, to the fear of being upbraided with past faults, or to the lawfull care of preserving to the ministers of the gospel, that authority necessary for the right discharging of their ministry.

The apostles must therefore have depended upon more than natural means, to have thus neglected all natural ones, and to have chosen such as were contrary. They must have had no expectations either from their reputation or personal merit; they must have been sure of success by other ways, and have believed, that the less they appeared proper at first for their office, the more visible would be the power of him that commissioned them. We shall see in the sequel, that this has been their constant persuasion, and that such a persuasion must have been from heaven.

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* Matt. xvi. 23.

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A R T. IV.

They all agree in what is essential; but this conformity was not concerted. The truth of the main point proved by some seeming contradictions.

BUT, before I engage in a deeper consideration of the inimitable and divine character of the evangelists, I shall stop a few moments to compare what they have written; and I find, by comparing their books, new proofs of a sincerity, not only humanly perfect, but truly divine.

They all agree in what is essential; and this conformity amongst several contemporary authors, is of inestimable merit, to those who have a love of truth, especially in things of such importance: but this conformity was not agreed on; and of this we have convincing proofs.

1. The style is different, tho' the general and common character of the evangelists be that of an admirable simplicity, infinitely removed from all flattery and affectation. This difference of style is sensible betwixt St. Matthew and St. John, and betwixt both these writers and St. Luke; and this verifies what is otherways proved by tradition, that these authors are different.

2. They did not all write at the same time. St. Luke speaks of those who had written before him, and we learn from monuments of antiquity, that St. Matthew wrote the first, and St. John the last of all.

3. As the times were different, so were the places in which they wrote. And this proves there was no agreement amongst them.

4. If there had, the evangelists would have formed a compact body of history; they would have placed every event in its natural order, and done what interpreters have endeavoured to do since, by uniting what is particular to each evangelist, to form of separate parts a complete history. Whereas it is visible, on the contrary, that every evangelist has chosen for himself a particular order, without attention to a general disposition; and

and if his narration agrees with that of others, it is truth and not design that causes the agreement.

5. We are still more satisfied, when we observe some seeming contradictions in the evangelists; for it is evident, they would have avoided them if they had written in concert, or else would have explained them, so as to prevent that unfavourable opinion which some might conceive of authors that seem to contradict each other.

Why, for example, does St. Luke, who wrote after St. Matthew, make use of a genealogy so different from that given by the former, of the family of Jesus Christ, which he had drawn from the public archives? or why does he not explain in what manner they may be reconciled? Was it, that he desired to be believed preferably to St. Matthew? or could he hope to be believed himself, taking no notice of a genealogy so different from his, nor offering to shew its falsity? but, on the contrary, he seems only to oppose it by another, of whose grounds he leaves us quite ignorant.

Some perhaps might think they had a right to suspend their judgment betwixt these two evangelists; and refuse to credit either, seeing them so at variance: but it is certainly contrary to all human reason, to suspect them of having acted by agreement, upon seeing the little precaution they have taken to remove a kind of scandal which this seeming contradiction might possibly occasion.

If St. Luke was ignorant of what St. Matthew had written, the affectation of being conformable to him, could never enter into his mind. And if he knew it, without giving himself any trouble about the bad effect which the difference of genealogies would infallibly produce in the minds of a great many, it is still more evident he could not write in concert.

The strength of this argument becomes more cogent, when we reflect upon this unconcern of St. Luke, after having written his gospel, upon his silence, upon his constancy in not saying a word, which might serve as an elucidation. For tho' christians might remain satisfied, yet it was impossible for strangers not to object to this diversity. It must be then, that St. Luke, notwithstanding these circumstances, refused designedly to add any thing:

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thing: and now so severe and constant a refusal, could never be the effect of a mutual agreement.

We may observe some other seeming contradictions in things indeed of less importance, but which still more fully prove, that the evangelists were very far from writing through any other motive but truth.

St. Matthew and St. Mark say, that Jesus Christ cured a blind man in coming from Jericho *, and St. Luke says positively, that it was going thither, adding several other actions which Jesus Christ did in that city, and in particular the honour he did Zaccheus to chuse his house for his lodging.

The miracle of the centurion's servant, who was cured by Jesus Christ, is celebrated in the gospel: † but one of the principal circumstances is very differently related by St. Matthew, who says the centurion came himself to ask that favour of Christ, from what it is by St. Luke, who assures us, that this officer judged himself unworthy ‡ to appear before him, and deputed some of his friends.

When Jesus Christ sent his disciples into Judea to preach that the kingdom of God was near at hand; he forbade them to prepare any thing for their journey, not so much as a staff ||, according to St. Luke and St. Matthew. But St. Mark excepts in this general prohibition the staff, so necessary to foot-travellers.

I know these difficulties may be removed §, but not without thinking: and many are not capable of finding out by themselves what reconciles them. Men who form the design of writing on the same subject, suffer not such differences to escape them, which must be perceived by every one; or should they have escaped their attention, they take great care afterwards to reform them; but the evangelists saw and left them. They acted therefore out of another principle than human wisdom:

* Matth. xx. 29. Mark x. 46. Luke xviii. 35. &c. xix. 1.

† Matth. viii. 5.

‡ Luke vii. 7.

|| Luke ix. 3. Matth. x. 10. Mark vi. 8.

§ They are answered in the following chapters.

dom: they thought of nothing but being sincere, without affecting to be so: they therefore were moved by a Spirit superior to all difficulties, since he dispensed with their obviating any of these objections.

We find many difficulties of this kind in the history of the resurrection of Jesus Christ; but the chief is the narration of the angel's appearance, who spoke to the holy women. St. Matthew has described it thus *: "And behold, there was a great earthquake: for the
"angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came
"and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his
"raiment white as snow. So that the keepers who
"were near the sepulchre, were so seized on with fear,
"that they became as dead men. But the angel addressing himself to the women, said to them, Fear not
"ye, for I know that ye seek Jesus who was crucified;
"he is not here; he is risen." One would think, by this narration, that the same angel who frightened the guards, heartened the women, and that all this passed in the same moment.

But St. Luke relates this in a manner that appears different. "The women, says he †, saw that the stone
"which had been before the sepulchre, was taken away. They went in, and found not the body of the
"Lord Jesus; which having caused in them surprize
"and trouble, two men appeared before them in shining raiment. And seeing them seized with fear, said
"to them, Why seek ye amongst the dead him who is
"living? he is not here; he is risen."

To judge hastily of this apparition by such differences, one would not take it for the same. And St. John adds a new difficulty ‡, by separating Mary Magdalene from the other women, and granting to her alone the vision of the angels; tho' St. Matthew, Mark and Luke, assure positively, that they were all together when the angel informed them of the resurrection of Christ:

I repeat not here, what I have often observed, that these seeming contradictions are but apparent; and that by

* Matth. xxviii. 2. &c.

† Luke xxiv. 2. &c.

‡ John xx. 11. 12.

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by meditation we may find a means to reconcile them. I only insist here on that seeming contrariety, of which every one feels the impression; and I maintain, that authors who had concerted things, and had no hopes of persuading but by an uniformity of testimony, would have avoided with care a kind of contradiction, which is most visible perhaps to the vulgar, and more obvious than the answers of interpreters.

In reality, there have been men in all ages who have been offended at these appearances of inconsistency, and have looked on them as so many weaker parts, whereby they might attack the truth of scripture; but they ought to have produced a quite contrary effect. For nothing can be a stronger or more convincing proof of their verity, than this pretended weakness, which is an invincible proof they were not concerted; but that their authors were more intent upon truth, than a studied probability.

The great danger consisted not in some differences: it would have been greater from an entire visible conformity. The differences are rare, and affect not the essentials: but the suspicion which a too regular uniformity might cause, would have weakened the whole, and shaken the foundations; and it is in this the wise conduct of providence is visible. Providence knew our nature, jealousy, and doubts: it has distinguished betwixt dangers; and, to secure our faith in essentials, it has left wherewithal to exercise it in other points, having chosen a clear and visible conformity where it was necessary, and veiling it designedly where the veil itself would serve to prove it, by shewing it was not affected.

C H A P. V.

The supernatural and divine character of the evangelists common to them all, and which agrees with them alone, and admirably proves their sincerity. They content themselves with a simple narration, and suppress all reflections, even when they appear unavoidable and necessary. A proof that such moderation is not the effect of artifice, nor of common sincerity, but of a supernatural conduct. New proofs; their simplicity and apparent indifference in speaking of Jesus Christ and his mysteries, tho' they were full of zeal and love for him, and had an high idea of his actions, doctrine, and mysteries. It is a double prodigy, that this is the character of all the evangelists.

FROM the consideration of their writings, I shall pass to that of the authors themselves, in order to examine their spirit and character; and I find hereby new proofs of their strict sincerity.

For they all resemble one another in those points wherein they resemble no other men. They write of the most astonishing things, without appearing astonished: they declare the greatest wonders, as if they were common and ordinary: they speak of what concerns them the nearest, with a calmness and sedateness which resemble indifference: and they all deny themselves, with the same severity, all manner of reflections, even where they seem absolutely necessary and indispensable.

Such a character is not only new, but single. And it doubles the prodigy, that we find it in all the evangelists in the same degree, tho' we see no traces of it in other men.

But let us proceed to particulars: not with an intent to observe all, but to judge, by some observations, what a variety of matter we should find, were we to enlarge upon the subject.

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A R T. I.

They content themselves with a simple narration, and suppress all reflections, even where they appear necessary and unavoidable.

IF the evangelists, in taking notice of the meanness of their birth and employment, had mentioned a word about the design of God, which was to evidence his power by using none but weak instruments; on a sudden, they would have fixed the mind on the true point of light, and made their readers perceive, that their very ignorance and meanness were necessary in the designs of heaven. They owed, as one would think, this reflection both to the power and wisdom of God, as well as to themselves. Why then did they not make it? It must have been present to their mind; why then did they suppress it?

Their faults, which they speak of so often, and with such sincerity, would have appeared more excusable, had they said, at least but once, that they served to shew in them the strength of grace, which changed them on a sudden into quite other men: and yet they deny themselves this reflection; and who but they would have used such reserve and moderation?

They relate, how the chief priests and pharisees asked Pilate to place a guard at the sepulchre of Jesus Christ, during three days, for fear his disciples should steal his body, and publish afterwards that he was risen; and that the governor answered, Ye have guards, let them guard the sepulchre as ye think proper. This was the place to say, That providence took them in their own snare; that their very precautions against the religion of Jesus Christ became its proofs; and that, by thus placing guards, which depended on themselves, and not on the governor, they took away the very shadow of all distrust and diffidence: but the evangelists are content with the bare history, and take no advantage of inferences. Such moderation, in such circumstances, cannot be natural.

The guards, who had been as it were thunderstruck by the glory of the angel * who appeared to them, and flung back the stone with which the sepulchre was closed, after having been witnesses of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, published at the desire of the priests who paid them for their falsehood, how his disciples, during their sleep, had stolen him away. It is not possible to relate this gross imposture, without reflecting at the same time on its confutation, *viz.* the prevarication and rashness of those men, who affirmed themselves witnesses of what had been done in their sleep. But what is not in the power of uninspired nature, has been in the power of the evangelist †. He has related that lie, and, what is still more, the success of it, and then he has held his peace. Is the mind of man capable of such reserve? is there any one so ignorant of the heart of man, as not to perceive this surpasses its capacity, and bears the stamp of supernatural power?

St. Peter and St. John ‡ being informed by Mary Magdalene, that the sepulchre of Jesus Christ was open, and his body not to be found, determined to go thither; in running, St. John, as the youngest, came first; but, by a natural horror, he had not the resolution to enter. St. Peter, less timid, entered; and he saw with astonishment, that the linen in which the body of Jesus had been wrapt, was left behind; and that the handkerchief with which his head had been bound, was laid apart from the other linen. St. John, who had first confusedly seen these things by stooping down, and looking into the sepulchre, entered after St. Peter, examined all, and never thought of attributing this effect to his resurrection.

All these circumstances clearly prove, that the apostles were incapable of a design of stealing the body of Jesus Christ, much less of executing this design; since the two disciples, who appeared to have had the most courage and zeal, looked upon it as a bold action to go to the

* Matth. xxviii. 11.

† And this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day. Matth. xxviii. 15.

‡ John xx. 2. &c.

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the sepulchre, when it was open and the guards were gone: since for fear of being observed, they went running, and separate from each other; since one of them even refused to go in, not thro' fear of man, but from a less serious apprehension; but being animated by the example of St. Peter, he saw together with him the linen cloth on one side, and the handkerchief on the other; and since it is manifest, that had they had the design of taking away the body of Jesus Christ, they would not have lost time in unfolding the wrappings and laying them decently aside. Their precipitation and fear of a surprize, must have prevented any thing of this kind.

Why therefore does not St. John, one of Christ's disciples, when he relates these circumstances, make some such reflection? Why does he stop short there, where the mind of man, left to itself, could not have stopped. He knew those reports which the Jews affected to spread abroad. What he relates is sufficient to prove the falsity, and without doubt he was sensible of it: why does he not then make the application? Sincerity here is the least point of consideration; what proves it, is still more surprizing: and I cannot refuse my assent to those men, who leave me at liberty to make those reflections myself, where they are so strong and decisive, and content themselves with the simple narration.

A R T. II.

Proofs that such a moderation is not the effect of artifice, nor of an ordinary sincerity, but of a supernatural conduct.

IT would be carrying diffidence to a great extremity, to suspect that the evangelists suppressed all transactions they had an interest in, to the end that this moderation might be accounted in them a higher merit, and that they might persuade others with more efficacy, by thus artfully hiding their desire of persuading. A finesse of this kind would strip sincerity of all its advantages, and of those marks whereby we are to distinguish it from falshood; nay, it would become suspected by those

proofs which should establish it; and by a malignity without principle or rule, mankind might doubt of every thing, even of what is most evident and certain.

But tho' we should suppose affectation and art in this simplicity of the evangelists, in regard of things in which they had an interest; there are several other instances, wherein none can attribute to this principle the severity with which they waved all reflections.

They had all a high esteem of Jesus Christ, of his innocence and holiness. Yet they all say, that he was baptized by St. John, which was only a baptism of humiliation, and in appearance was only fit for sinners, and but a preparation for the gospel. There was a kind of necessity to reconcile this with the eminent virtue of Jesus Christ. One word might have explained to us this mystery, wherein the glory of Jesus Christ is so far interested; but this single word escapes not from any of the evangelists, and they all leave us in an astonishment, tho' they were sensible that this would be the consequence.

Almost all the circumstances of the temptation of Jesus Christ in the desert, have something that offends and shocks us at first. One sees not without pain, and a kind of horror, the Saviour of the world in the power of Satan*, who transports him to the top of the temple, and after, of a high mountain, from whence he shews him all the empires of the world, which he dares to call himself master of, without this falsehood being contradicted. One would expect some explication, which might render this part of the gospel less astonishing to human reason, which seems so derogatory to the honour and majesty of Christ; but this is refused: and yet the evangelists who refuse it are not less certain, that the circumstances they mention will become the object of the faith of a multitude of persons; the reason is, that they knew they were true, and relied on the power of God to make them be believed.

The same may be said of the fear and mortal sadness of Jesus Christ †, of his bloody sweat, of his agony, of the

* Matth. chap. iv.

† Luke, chap. xxii.

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need he had of being comforted by an angel, as likewise of his prayer, which he repeated so often, to be dispensed with from drinking his chalice, for which he seemed to thirst * so short a time before. It is certain that the evangelists, who looked on Jesus Christ as the source and fountain-head of all courage in the martyrs, would never have imagined any such thing, much less would they have wrote it, if they had not been obliged by truth; but this is not our object at present. My astonishment is, that they have said nothing to explain such things as appeared incompatible with the strength, intrepidity, and entire resignation of Jesus Christ, from the first instant of his incarnation. For their own interest is not in question, but that of their master. Can it be supposed that there is any artifice here in their suppressing all reflections? Do they expect that people will be better disposed to look upon Jesus Christ as God, after having seen him less resolute in appearance than the martyrs? It is evident, it could be nothing but the Holy Ghost, who both conducted the thoughts and pen of the evangelists, and forbade them to add any thing further; whilst the human mind, without this assistance, must have condemned itself for such an omission. And it is evident the evangelists must have been persuaded that they were only his organs, and that neither their reflections, nor any other methods of human wisdom, were necessary to cause those truths to be received, which he could make us assent to whenever he pleased.

This becomes still more clear and manifest, on those occasions, wherein the very words of Jesus Christ seem to diminish the idea the evangelists would fain give him, and might have been softened by some proper corrective. As for instance,

It is related in St. Mark and St. Luke †, “ that a man falling on his knees before our Saviour, said to him, Good master, what should I do to acquire life eternal? And Jesus Christ said to him, Why callest thou

* Luke, xxii. 15.

† Mark x. 17. Luke xviii. 18.

“thou me good? there is none good but God alone.” This answer, which the Arians have very much abused, seems to put a great difference betwixt Jesus Christ and God. One should think it would have been proper to prevent this abuse, by determining the true sense of Christ’s words; and none can deny but this must have been known to the evangelists; out of what motive therefore did they suppress it? what zealous disciple would have failed on this occasion, for the sake of his master’s glory, to clear up so dangerous an obscurity? But it was less necessary to clear this up, than to prove the sincerity of the evangelists, and the supernatural manner in which they were inspired. They would never have related the answer of Jesus Christ, if they had not been sincere; and they would have explained it, if they had been directed in their writings merely by reason and human prudence. Such difficulties left unexplained, prove the truth of the facts, and the inspiration of the evangelists. And these two points established prove all the rest.

This is the reason we ought to set a high value upon an example of a like nature. It is written in St. Mark *, that Jesus Christ speaking of his last coming, the chief circumstances of which he mentions, added these words, which the enemies of his divinity have since turned into their strongest argument against this article of the christian faith: “But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.” The ignorance of the Son is compared with that of the angels; and the term of Son is absolute, without adding the Son of man. Who would not wish that this term had been explained? and which of us would have left it in this harshness, without softening it? but by this procedure we should have spoiled all. The correctives which soften it are in other parts of scripture. It was necessary in this place for the general interest of the gospel truths, that one particular point should be related in the very words spoken by

* Mark xiii. 32.

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by Jesus Christ, and that these terms, which seem contrary to his infinite knowledge, should be left without interpretation; for by this none can suspect the evangelists of insincerity, because they appear to have been sincere to excess. None can accuse them of having followed in their writings mere human views, since they disregard them in essential points. And thus we have sufficient grounds always to believe them, because they chuse rather to leave some doubts about Christ's divinity and omniscience, than weaken the truth.

A R T. III.

New proofs: their simplicity, and visible disinterestedness, when they speak of Jesus Christ and his mysteries, tho' they were full of zeal, and love for him, and had a high idea of his actions, doctrine, and mysteries.

THESE observations, which being united mutually strengthen each other, necessarily make a great impression upon minds that are well acquainted with the marks of truth, and instructed in the nature and constitution of mankind. But we have not yet dived into what is profoundest and most inimitable in the character of the evangelists.

Every one knows with what ardor they loved Jesus Christ, and what zeal they had for him; and yet they speak of his greatest actions, of his numberless miracles, of his sublime doctrine, not only without emotion, and without any of those affections of admiration, and the desire of producing the like in others, which are natural on such occasions, but in terms so simple, so short, and distant from all affectation, that we should think, did we not know their sentiments otherwise, that they were writing a foreign history, and such a one, as they were indifferent to.

They had the same ideas of the sufferings of Jesus Christ, as the prophet Isaiah, and the other prophets, who foretold him: they knew the merit and value of them as well as St. Paul: and yet they give us the history,

history, without stopping at any circumstance, without mixing any reflections, without intimating in the least those impressions which the pains and ignominies of their lord and master make on them; without once attempting to excite in others, either compassion, indignation, or astonishment.

One would even think that they designed to abridge the account as much as possible, so little do they dwell on the most important circumstances. In reality, not one of the evangelists relate them all. We must unite their histories to have a complete account of the sufferings of Jesus Christ: and even then it appears evidently that all is not said.

The scourging which was so cruel, because it was designed by Pilate to move the Jews to compassion, and touch them with pity, is marked only by one word, and that indirectly, in two evangelists *. The unheard-of outrages they did Jesus Christ in the house of Caiaphas, and in the Praetorium, where he was exposed to the insults and barbarity of the Roman soldiers, are related in two or three lines. The † crucifixion is passed over in a word. It is occasionally that we are informed in another place, ‡ that Jesus Christ was nailed to a cross, and we should not have been sure of this, but for the history of his resurrection.

Who amongst us would have written in this manner the life of a good man, unjustly oppressed by a wicked multitude? And especially had he been our parent, our friend: had he loaded us with favours, had he died to save us, had he saved our family as well as us, had he delivered our country and state from cruel enemies, by sacrificing himself for the public good; what sentiments would not this have produced in us of gratitude, admiration, love, indignation against his enemies, hatred of their injustice, with an ardent desire of kindling the same emotions in others? Whence happens it then, that men who worshipped Jesus Christ as their God, who

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* Matt. xxvii. 20. Mark xv. 15.

† Matt. xxvii. 34.

‡ John xx. 25.

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believed themselves redeemed by him from eternal death, and who were persuaded he was sacrificed for their sakes, speak with so much moderation and lenity of his contumelies and sufferings? and how can they, with so much gratitude and love, preserve so great a tranquillity? Here is visibly the operation of another spirit than human: and the finger of God is here more clearly marked out, than in those prodigies which baffled the sorceries of the magicians who resisted Moses.

For it was on one side so natural to praise the innocence of Jesus Christ, and on the other to inveigh against, and make odious his enemies, to break into complaints at their injustice, that it would have been impossible for the evangelists to be contented with a simple narration, without intermixing some reflections and exclamations, if they had not been conducted by a divine wisdom, superior not only to human reason, but to faith itself, and the virtue of the greatest saints: and if this wisdom had not made itself absolute master of their passions to repress them, and of all the motions of their gratitude and zeal, to moderate their sallies.

Let any one read with this thought the history of the passion in the evangelists, and then judge of what moment it was that all should content themselves with the simple facts, without qualifying them, without charging them with any thing that was not a necessary part of the narration. The envy and fury of the priests against Jesus Christ drew not on them the least invective: the perfidy of Judas is told without the least hatred or bitterness. His insolence in daring to approach Jesus Christ to kiss him, and betray him by this sign of confidence and friendship, excites the indignation of every reader, but extorts not a word from the historian. The weakness of Pilate is evident, but the evangelists content themselves with relating the facts which prove it. The pride of Herod, who revenges himself for the silence of Christ, by attributing it to ignorance or folly, well deserved to have been confounded, by revealing the deep wisdom which humbled his pride; but upon this very interesting point all the evangelists observe the same reservedness of expression

It

It is impossible, after these reflections, which serve as a preface to many others, we should not perceive, how so constant a conduct on one side, and so superior to nature on the other, must be a character of divinity, which no reason or prejudice can darken?

A R T. IV.

It is a double prodigy, that so singular a character should be common to all the apostles.

THIS character so singular in itself, and so surprising, is not that of one single evangelist; it belongs to them all, tho' they wrote in places; and at times quite different; and yet it is equal in all. If the first amongst them served the rest as a model; where had this first an example to follow? was there any such thing before him? have we in all antiquity a history of this nature? is it possible there should have been any? whence comes it therefore, that a publican, such as St. Matthew, formed to himself so perfect an idea of so new a thing, and so sublime a history as that of the Son of God made man, suffering and dying for our salvation? and how could he have attained by a first essay, to so august a simplicity, in comparison of which all human eloquence and reason are but puerility and weakness? For both these qualities would have inspired St. Matthew with a character quite contrary to that which we so justly admire in him.

But if the other evangelists are the imitators of the first, whence came that discretion which made them imitate him in such a manner? how happens it, that they all equally share this distinction from other authors? why were not some of them offended with his apparent simplicity? why did they not prefer to his a stile more sprightly, fuller of reflections, of testimonies of zeal for Jesus Christ, and resentment against his enemies? is it easy to comprehend all the grandeur and sublimity in St. Matthew's manner, to penetrate into the true secret of it, and

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and discover the reasons? is it easy, I say, after we have made many reflections, and a long time studied him, so faithfully to imitate him, as never to deviate? To convince ourselves thoroughly in this, we need only at this day, when we have four histories formed on the same plan, make a tryal, and we shall find how difficult an imitation would be; especially if we were full of faith and love, if we affectionately esteemed the sufferings of Jesus Christ, and were inflamed with that celestial fire, with which the evangelists burned. For it is in the union of these dispositions, with their moderation, reserve, and zeal, that this wonder consists; it is a miracle to love as they did, and another to write with such seeming indifference. But it is a prodigy of grace itself, and the work of the Holy Ghost alone, to unite such fervent love with so dispassionate and cool a stile.

A R T. V.

None of the evangelists ever took notice of his own moderation, nor of that of others. Neither has it been observed by any of their disciples.

IF the evangelists had acted in this out of human views, and with a design of drawing more belief from an affectation of modesty and simplicity, they never would have been able to have kept up this fraud to the end; artifice cannot be so constant as truth: it betrays itself in the consequence, and gives itself the lie; and the fear of not succeeding by an unobserved and fruitless modesty, makes it willing to set itself off, and hint at least that it acts in a simple disinterested manner; to the end we may be pleased, and put confidence in it.

If one of the evangelists had command enough over himself, and sufficient address never to depart from the character he had assumed, it would have been almost impossible for the others to have preserved the same attention with the same success: they would not have failed to have made their disciples, remark the wise and prudent manner in which they had written.

Artifice has evermore some confidents, and it has need of them. For it is neither truth nor the testimony of a sincere conscience, that support and comfort it; something else it must have to bear it up; and success itself, separated and abstract from the glory of those cares which made it succeed, is not a sufficient joy for its pains.

There would therefore have been men from the time of the apostles, men intrusted with the secret, who would have made others admire the character of the evangelists, their disinterestedness, their modesty, their unaffected simplicity, and who would not have failed of making many reflections on the attention of the evangelists in making none at all. Afterwards this proof would have been insisted on; the strength and validity of it would have been shewn; and nothing would have been better known, or more celebrated than this beautiful character, so nobly supported by the first sacred penmen, and so wisely unfolded by their most learned disciples.

A R T. VI.

The difference betwixt them, and the prophets who are so full of reflections and emotions, is an evident proof that the Spirit of God conducted both.

WHAT makes the moderation of the evangelists still more surprizing is, that they had before their eyes the example of the prophets who gave a loose to the warmest emotions, tho' they saw not but in a distant futurity an image of those things whereof the evangelists were spectators. Isaiah is full of sentiments of gratitude, and exhausts his imagination in reflections, when he discovers afar the sufferings and ignominies of Christ. "It is he, says he, * who truly charges himself with our sorrows, and suffers what it is but just we should suffer. He was wounded for our iniquities: he was bruised for our crimes. The chastisement, that reconciles us, has fallen upon him; and it is by his wounds that we have been cured. We were all
" gone

* Isaiah liii. 4, &c.

“ gone astray like lost sheep : but God has laid upon
 “ him all our iniquities. He offered himself because he
 “ would, and opened not his mouth : he suffered him-
 “ self to be led to slaughter, like a sheep : and he was
 “ like a lamb before the hand of him that shears him.”

David in a transport not only sees the cross and Cal-
 vary, but expresses himself in the person of our Saviour:
 and whereas Christ remained silent, without making re-
 proaches or menaces to those who had procured and were
 the ministers of his death, this prophet treats them as
 lions and mad dogs, who feed themselves with his suf-
 ferings, and wait with impatience for the hour of his
 death. “ They have pierced my hands and feet,” says
 he in the person of Christ, * “ they have counted all
 “ my bones: they consider me with attention: they
 “ have divided my garments amongst them. Deliver,
 “ O Lord, my soul from the violence of dogs, deliver
 “ me from the throat of the lion. Young bulls have
 “ surrounded me: fat and strong bulls have besieged
 “ me.” Why do the evangelists say nothing of this na-
 ture? Why do they not imitate the tender expressions
 of Isaiah? Why are they so calm, they who were pre-
 sent at every thing, whilst the prophets, separated from
 the accomplishment of the mysteries of redemption by so
 many ages, are so touched and moved with them?

With what anathemas is not the six psalm filled a-
 gainst the Jews, the enemies of Jesus Christ, and in par-
 ticular against Judas, whose treason was prefigured by
 that of Achitophel? And in psal. lxxix, where David
 speaks in the person of our Saviour, are there not like-
 wise a multitude of maledictions against those who were
 the authors of his death? “ They have fed me with
 “ gall, says he, and in my thirst they have given me
 “ vinegar to drink. Let their table [the scriptures are
 “ understood] become to them a net and a snare; let
 “ their eyes be covered with darkness, and let them al-
 “ ways stoop down to the earth. Pour forth, O Lord,
 “ thy wrath upon them, and let thy indignation over-
 D d 2 “ overwhelm

* Psalm xxii.

“whelm them. Let their habitation be desert, and let
 “none dwell in their houses. * Because they persecu-
 “ted him whom thou hadst smitten, and have added
 “new wounds to my pains. Let them therefore add
 “iniquity to iniquity: let them not enter into thy
 “righteousness: let them be blotted out from the book
 “of the living; and let not their names be written a-
 “mongst those of the just.” The evangelists knew these
 maledictions, and they saw their accomplishment. Why
 therefore took they no notice of them, and so severely
 with-held themselves at the very time they were so justly
 merited?

The conspiracy of the Jews and Gentiles, as also of
 Herod and Pilate, against Jesus Christ, has been lively
 represented in another psalm, as an open rebellion a-
 gainst Jesus Christ, and God himself. “Why, says the
 “prophet †, have the nations assembled themselves in
 “tumult, and why have the people imagined vain
 “things? The kings of the earth have stood up toge-
 “ther, and the princes have conspired against the Lord
 “and his anointed.” (The church of Jerusalem, full
 of the Holy Ghost, understands these words, of Herod,
 Pilate, the Jews and Gentiles.) “But, continues the
 “royal prophet, he who dwells in heaven will laugh
 “them to scorn, the Lord will have them in derision:
 “he will speak to them in his wrath: and he will fill
 “them with fear and confusion in his indignation.”
 Why are not these words, so full of grandeur and ma-
 jesty, repeated by the evangelists? and why, when
 they relate the reconciliation of Herod and Pilate, who
 are combined only to oppress Christ, do not they con-
 found their pride by a prophecy, which so clearly fore-
 tells their vanity and weakness?

But it is by this conduct God has particularly evi-
 denced the divinity of the scriptures, and the efficacy of
 that Spirit which inspired them. It was worthy of the
 Holy Ghost, to shew so clearly and lively to the pro-
 phets those future mysteries, that they should look on
 them as present, and as accomplishing before their eyes;
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* This signifies the dispersion and exile of the Jews.

† Psalm ii.

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to fill them with sentiments conformable to the spectacle that was presented to them ; to inspire them with indignation against Christ's enemies ; with tenderness and gratitude towards him ; with desire of vengeance on such injustice : and to render them his associates as judge of all mankind, making them pronounce in his name such sentences, as seem imprecations and curses, when we consider only the persons of the prophets ; but are immutable decrees of divine justice, when we consider the prophets as God's interpreters.

There is none but God alone who can discover futurity with this certainty, evidence, and strong impression. Human conjectures have nothing of this nature : they are confused and uncertain, mixed with fear and obscurity, and by consequence incapable of strongly moving the mind, and stirring up those passionate motions for uncertain indistinct objects. Hesitation is their character ; and the necessary consequences of this hesitation are a real timidity and false modesty.

Tranquillity and moderation were not therefore proper for the prophets : they would have weakened the truth by relating it simply : it was necessary to support it by reflections, and lively sentiments, whilst it was as yet at a distance : it was necessary to approach it in perspective, and make it sensible when its accomplishment was to be deferred for several ages ; and none could attribute the passionate motions of the prophets, but to the certainty and evidence of the mysteries, because the objects of them had no relation with their persons, interests, or age.

But nothing of this nature was proper for those who had seen the accomplishment of the prophecies, and whom God chose to inform all mankind. Reflections then would have added nothing to the truth, but would have only served to render it suspected : events needed no more than a simple narration, and nothing became sincerity so well as modesty.

Yet men conduct themselves in a quite contrary manner. They are modest when they speak of futurity, and full of boldness and pride when their conjectures have been right. They are timorous and hesitating,

where the prophets have been firm and positive ; and are sure to take advantage of every circumstance which the evangelists overlooked and omitted. They are little moved, where the prophets are most affected ; and they are on the contrary lively and passionate, where the evangelists are modest and calm. Who could put this difference betwixt the conduct of men, when they act naturally, and the conduct which the prophets and evangelists have observed. What could make the prophets so ardent, and the evangelists so calm ? What power inspired Isaiah with such tender sentiments, before Christ was sacrificed for us ? and who is it that restrained the same temper in the evangelists, and especially in St. John, a faithful witness of all, and distinguished from the others by the tender love of his master ? these two characters, in appearance so opposite, but so worthy of the spirit of God, could never have been the effect but of his own wisdom and power : and there could be none but he, to whom all ages are present, and who is master of the thoughts and hearts of men, that could discern and put in execution what was suitable both to future and accomplished mysteries, to the prophets charged with the prediction, and the evangelists who were entrusted with writing the history.

C H A P. VI.

The evangelists and apostles have sealed with their blood what they have written. The strength of this proof in relation to the first founders of a religion. Had they not been the disciples of Jesus Christ, they would not have deserved to have been believed. Miracles ought not to be suspected merely because they are miracles. The scriptures of the New Testament are essentially united. They are not like those of the Old Testament, peculiar to one nation.

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A R T. I.

The evangelists have sealed with their blood what they have written.

WE have seen with astonishment what care divine providence has taken to render the testimony the evangelists have given to Jesus Christ superior to all suspicion, and to unite in their persons and writings all the possible characters of sincerity and truth. But there is a last, which crowns all the rest.

The evangelists have sealed with their blood what they have written. They have, like the ancient prophets, given their lives to strengthen the truth: and after a thousand cares and labours, they have sacrificed themselves to add to their testimony the respect and veneration of a sacrifice.

What history ever had such a proof of truth? what witnesses shall we believe, if we believe not those, who suffered death for what they attested? Is there out of the true religion any thing of a similar nature. Can one find elsewhere men who have given their lives to ascertain facts which others contested? and what excuse remains for those who believe so many things upon the word of historians, if they refuse to believe men full of zeal and charity, who esteemed themselves happy in dying for them, and for inculcating the verities of the gospel?

What can in reality obscure a proof of so great brightness, and strength? can falsehood hope for any thing after this life? is not all untruth and imposture necessarily timid? does not a conscience which artifice and delusion cannot impose on, shew its steadiness on a critical occasion? does not death tear off the vizard from hypocrisy and dissimulation? and do not the torments that precede a violent death, banish a vain appearance of courage which is founded upon nothing solid? for where would be the interest of such an imposture? who would sacrifice his life to a known phantom? who would in such an article expect any advantage

tage from a fiction of which he himself was the author ? and how could he support at the same time cruel torments, and his own reproaches ?

The world never saw, nor never will see any thing of this nature. A man may sacrifice his life to a false glory ; but it is unheard of, that any man should chuse death to attest a falsity, evidently and certainly known. And this is the more inconceivable, when we must be forced to suppose the same phrenzy in several, contrary to all natural principles and sentiments.

A R T. II.

Strength of this argument in-relation to the founders of a religion.

WE ought to make a great difference betwixt men seduced by an error, which has gained credit and is become popular, and the first seducers. It is not impossible but that men deceived, should give to some writings an authority which they deserve not, and that delusion, strengthened by time and prejudice, may induce them to suffer something for their defence, or if you please, to give even their life to witness their truth. Conscience then takes place of truth and light, tho' it be in the dark : the fear of God gives a real strength to it ; and all the sentiments that spring from this fear, may support those who are not deceived but in regard of the object, and who are persuaded in other respects with an absolute certainty ; for it is not doubtful to them, but that they are obliged to suffer every thing for religion, and that it would be a great crime in them to do the contrary.

But this cannot hold good in respect to the first seducers ; for all that can strengthen seduced persons, makes against them. They must resist truth, conscience, and God himself. They must bear up against all that supports others ; and this for no other end, but to suffer torment, and death itself, without hoping for any good from

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from so obstinate a folly ; and this with a well grounded fear of being punished by that eternal truth which they have outrageously offended.

Whoever believes this possible, knows not nature, nor himself. It is endeavouring to render every thing doubtful, to oppose such an evidence, and certainty, with ill-grounded diffidence ; and it is rejecting all evidence, not to believe witnesses who shed their blood, and had no other motives of doing so, but to spread every where mutual love, truth, and benevolence.

A R T. III.

If the evangelists had not been disciples of Jesus Christ, they would not have deserved belief ; so far is it from being true that they ought to be suspected on that account.

BUT some perhaps will say, do not such professed and zealous witnesses shew too much passion ? should you not quote others, as sincere, but less prejudiced ? Historians who declare themselves disciples, weaken the first of these qualities by the second ; and would not the certainty of facts be better established by persons who were well instructed, but less interested ?

Is it being interested to lay down one's life for the truth ? is it in such a circumstance an historian ought to be suspected ? and if we refuse to believe him, because he spilt his blood to gain our belief, what other proof do we look for beyond this ? I own it is the duty of a common historian to shew neither zeal, nor affection ; but it is easy to see, that in regard of religion it would be injustice to expect any thing of this nature, and that such a disposition is not possible : for whoever saw the miracles of Jesus Christ, and knew their certainty, must have been moved with them : whoever felt the force of those proofs which Christ gave of his mission, ought to believe him the Messiah promised in the scriptures ; and whoever did so, ought to have become his disciple. Indifference and neutrality are not possible, but inasmuch as they are mixed with doubt ; doubt itself is not possible, but for want of knowledge, or examination ;
and

and an historian who has examined nothing, is ill qualified to teach others. An historian must be sure of his facts to satisfy us: he must have seen the things, when he speaks of them as an ocular witness. It is not then possible, he should be indifferent about things he has seen, and believes indubitably certain; and when these things necessarily carry along with them persuasion and faith, it is impossible such an historian should write without being persuaded and sincere.

It is for this reason that a passage in Josephus is suspected of being supposititious, where mention is made of Jesus Christ: for it is known, that, on one side, by an unworthy * flattery, he has applied to Vespasian what the prophets had foretold of Christ: and we cannot comprehend on the other, he would have written of Jesus, that he was the † Christ, and not have believed in him, by uniting himself to the christians. These two reflections joined together, make the supposition evident, and the last would suffice tho' alone; nothing being more contrary to reason, than publicly to acknowledge Jesus for the Messiah, and refuse to listen to, and obey him.

Yet there might have been something of truth in the passage of Josephus, if we separate what seems too strong, and appears added to the discourse it interrupts. For if it be contrary to probability, that this historian has acknowledged Jesus for the Messiah, it is perhaps against probability likewise, that he has not spoken of him at all: but he has contented himself with general terms, which shew indeed a vague consideration, but enter not into any detail, and evidently prove, of what service to us would have been a number of historians like Josephus, as negligent and careless in regard to Christ, and for that reason as indifferent.

An exact knowledge of the miracles which Christ wrought, is inseparable from persuasion; and such a persuasion is the same thing as faith, to which it necessarily leads. For when facts are divine and miraculous, we cannot look on them as certain, without considering them as testimonies which God himself has given of
certain

* Joseph. l. 7. de bell. Judai. c. 12.

† Joseph. l. 18. antiq. c. 4.

certain truths ; and then these truths, and the religion of which they are a part, cannot be looked upon any longer as either doubtful, or indifferent.

A R T. IV.

The miracles they mention ought not to be suspected on this account, that they are miracles. If they had been less public, and less extraordinary, it would have been prudent to have been diffident.

BUT it is the miracles themselves, a stranger perhaps or infidel will say, which are difficult to be believed, and incline us to doubt of the evangelists sincerity. For it is just to be diffident of whatever is extraordinary, and we can never examine too scrupulously what deviates from the customary order of things ; especially when such prodigies are pleaded in favour of a particular religion.

The true religion fears not such an examination : on the contrary it requires and desires it as necessary ; for it is by this it distinguishes itself from those sects that are founded on nothing but fiction and delusion, and who find no difficulty in inventing false prodigies. But while we inquire into miracles, we must not suppose there can be none that are certain and indisputable, nor call in question God's power over nature, which is nothing but what he has willed, nor has any other essential laws but what the divine liberty has prescribed.

That we examine therefore with the strictest rigour those witnesses, who assure us, that they have seen the miracles of Christ, is what I not only consent to, but I exhort you to it, and have even set an example. But, after such an examination, remember, that miracles are not less certain for being exceptions to the general order of things : and that it would be depriving the deity of all the means of proving to us his designs and mysteries, to be always diffident of what is extraordinary and surprising.

In effect, those who endeavour thus to weaken the miracles of Christ, would demand them as an indispensable and necessary proof, was it said he had wrought none. They would have explained by natural ways, such as were not evidently above the power of nature. They would have called for manifest and most surprizing miracles, such as nothing could obscure, viz. the resurrection from the dead, or the cure of one born blind. They would have required, that they should have been wrought in public, thoroughly examined, and in such a number, that a whole nation might have been witnesses. They are therefore visibly unjust to refuse the very proofs they would have asked; to be distrustful of them because they have the marks they would have demanded, and to seek in their lustre and number, a pretext to doubt of them the very men who would have thought their doubts well grounded, if these miracles had been less frequent or extraordinary.

A R T. V.

God has united in the evangelists all that is capable of producing a full and perfect persuasion.

WE have therefore nothing to do for the future, but to join together all the proofs that we have of the exactness and sincerity of the evangelists and apostles, in order to admire the care God has taken to unite in them all that is capable of making an impresson upon a well disposed mind, and forming a compleat, a perfect, and full persuasion. They are all contemporaries, ocular witnesses, well instructed in all things, in which they themselves had a great and interesting share. They are in great number; and tho' they have written separately, in different times and places, they are perfectly unanimous in the fundamental and chief circumstances. It is notwithstanding evident, by the differences that have been observed, that they wrote not by agreement, and that it is truth alone which has united them. They speak of themselves, of their ignorance, of their weakness,

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nesses, of their faults, with an unparalleled ingenuousness. They are contented to write with simplicity naked facts, without taking any advantage from them, without explaining those which seem to need it, without making any reflections upon those which interest themselves the most, and without mixing in their narration either complaints, invectives, or exhortations, tho' they appear full of zeal, and write not, but to spread over the world the faith of the gospel. In a word, they expose themselves to all, suffer all, and this to attest the truth of what they write. They all equally offer themselves to death, and several amongst them lay down their lives to give the last sanction to their words. And they teach all those who hear them, to die for the same truths, and preserve, without alteration, the books wherein they are written. If there has been any thing of this nature since the beginning of the world ; if there be any facts amongst those that are the most certain and incontestable, which have the same proofs and characteristics of truth ; if it be possible, in not believing the evangelists, to believe any thing on the testimony of men ; we may then indeed doubt of the history of the gospel ; for there is no comparison betwixt its certainty and that of all such facts as depend on the veracity of writers.

A R T. VI.

The writings of the New Testament are in such a manner united with each other, that we must either admit, or reject them all.

BEFORE we finish this subject, I must observe two important things. The first, that all the writings of the New Testament are so connected together, by an essential and necessary relation, that we cannot separate them, but must look upon them all as sincere, or all fictitious, because the same facts and mysteries are spoken of in all. The history of the acts of the apostles supposes that of the evangelists. St. Paul's epistles have both for their basis : the epistles of St. Peter, St. James,

and St. John, have a close union with those of St. Paul. Even St. Jude's, tho' very short, recalls to mind all the essentials of the christian religion. We must receive, or reject them all: choice and distinction are impossible and useless; and however small a part we reserved, it would revive the rest. Now, after this let any one examine, how he could go about to reject all, and particularly to persuade the world that the acts of the apostles are fictitious, or what is still more chimerical and absurd, that the epistles of St. Paul are spurious.

A R T. VII.

The writings of the New Testament are not like those of the Old, peculiar to one people.

THE second observation is, that the writings of the New Testament are not like those of the Old, addressed to a single people, separated from all the rest by their manners and language, whose tradition by consequence was less public, or spread abroad; but that they were addressed equally to all the nations of the world, and in the most common tongue, to the Romans, Macedonians, Corinthians, Ephesians, Galatians*, Parthians, Hebrews of Palestine, the dispersed Jews, or twelve tribes. All those people I have mentioned must therefore necessarily have had, in the times of the apostles, the scriptures which were sent to them, and must have been able to shew the originals†. And

* The epistle of St. John was written to the Parthians, according to the ancients. St. Paul wrote to the Hebrews of Palestine; St. Peter to the dispersed Jews; St. James to the twelve tribes.

† Age jam qui voles curiositatem melius exercere in negotio salutis tuae; percurre ecclesias apostolicas, apud quas ipsae adhuc cathedrae apostolorum suis locis praesident: apud quas ipsae authenticae litterae eorum recitantur, sonantes vocem, et representantes faciem uniuscujusque. Proxima est tibi Achaia? habes Corinthum si non longe es à Macedonia, habes Philippos, habes Thessalonicenses. Si potes in Asiam tendere, habes Ephesum. Si autem Italiae adjaces, habes Romam, unde nobis quoque au-

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And here remains but one of two things to chuse, either to agree with all the nations of the earth, that their scriptures are derived from the apostles, and that all which they contain is exactly conformable to what these nations had seen in these divine men, or had learnt from them; or to suppose in all the people of the world a conspiracy to invent scriptures, whose doctrine and sentiments are so worthy of inspired men; that the whole world has been imposed on, without any one having had the least suspicion of the artifice, or the secret having been discovered by so many accomplices. Unless we will run into another absurdity, equally contrary to reason, and suppose that all nations have looked upon as sincere, and even divine writings, such whose falsity was known to them, the supposed authors having neither done or said any thing amongst them of a like nature, with what those scriptures mention, tho' those very authors appeal to them as witnesses and warrants. It would be offering violence to equity and good sense, to insist longer on this head; and if such an evidence suffices not for some minds, religion is sufficiently revenged of their opposition by their blindness.

E e 2

CHAP.

Storitas praesto est. Ista quam felix ecclesia, cui totam doctrinam apostoli cum suo sanguine profuderunt: ubi Petrus passioni dominicae adaequatur: ubi Paulus Joannis exitu coronatur: ubi apostolus Joannes, postea quam in oleum igneum demersus nihil passus est, insulam relegatur. Tertull. de praescript. c. 36, p. 245.

Ecquid verisimile est ut tot ac tantae (ecclesiae) in unam fidem erraverint: nullus, inter multas, eventus unus est. Exitus variasse debuerat error doctrinae ecclesiarum. Caeterum, quod apud multos unum invenitur, non est erratum, sed traditum. Tertull. de praescript. c. 28. p. 241.

C H A P. VII.

Proofs, that the scriptures of the New Testament are divine, and that the authors of them were inspired. Why the evangelists and apostles imitated not the old prophets, in saying; Behold, thus says the Lord. First proof of the divinity and inspiration of the scriptures of the New Testament: without this, the doctrine of Jesus Christ and his mysteries, would not have had any divine certainty in respect to us; and the writings of the New Testament would have been much inferior to those of the Old. Second proof; Jesus Christ did not only communicate his authority to his apostles, but likewise his wisdom and spirit, without which his authority would have been useless. Third proof; the apostles have mixed no human doctrine in the gospel. Fourth proof; They themselves assure us, that they were inspired; and they condemn the least doubt on this head. Fifth proof; they compare the truth of their words with the certainty and immobility of those promises which God is author of, and Christ the warrant. Sixth proof; St. Paul assures us, that the gospel which he preaches has nothing human in it; that he received it immediately from Christ; and that no alteration is to be made in it: the same is to be said of the other evangelists and apostles. Seventh proof; it is essential to the true religion, to be divine; essential to the scriptures, which are its depositaries, to be divine too; and lastly, it is essential to its first founders, to be inspired. Had they not declared themselves such, they would not have deserved credit. Certainty, that the scriptures of the New Testament have not been altered.

A R T. I.

Why the evangelists and apostles imitate not the antient prophets in declaring, as they, Thus says the Lord.

THE fruit of the inquiries I have made hitherto, has not ended merely in convincing me of the truth

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truth of the writings that compose the New Testament, and of the sincerity of the authors ; for I have met with several things which persuade me that these scriptures are divine, and their authors really inspired. But as this point is important, I ought not to content myself with certain prejudices which some observations may have produced, but descend to a particular examination, which cannot but be highly profitable.

We may be surprized that the prophets of the Old Testament repeat so often, Behold, thus says the Lord ; while the evangelists and apostles never use this expression, which seems so proper to signify a divine mission, and prophetic inspiration. But we ought not to confound times. When * God spoke to our forefathers, upon divers occasions, and in different manners, to discover to them the future mysteries of Jesus Christ, it was necessary to admonish mankind, that it was God who spoke ; but after he spoke to us by his Son clothed with our flesh, and after the accomplishment of those mysteries, we must only listen to the Son ; we must only repeat his words ; and it is not necessary to forewarn men, that it is the Lord who speaks, when we repeat what the Son has said.

It is for the same reason, that when they mention predictions which regard futurity, they substitute instead of the antient expression, " Behold, thus says the Lord," this new one, † " Behold, what says the Holy Ghost," or, " The Holy Ghost ordains," or, " The Holy Ghost declares," that the new prophecies may be distinguished which have a particular object, from those which have been accomplished in Christ, who is hereafter to be the only master we are to listen to.

Whatever we draw from these reflections, it is certain none can refuse the character of prophets to the apostles : the little I have quoted suffices, and we shall hereafter have infallible proofs. Therefore we are to conclude nothing from their not making use of this formula of the Old Testament.

E e 3

A R T,

* Heb. i. 1.

† Acts xxi. 11. xiii. 2. 1st. Tim. iv. 1.

A R T. II.

First proof, that the scriptures of the New Testament are divine, and their authors inspired. Without this, the doctrine of Jesus Christ and his mysteries would not have in our regard any divine certainty, and the scriptures of the New Testament would be very much inferior to those of the Old.

IT is not even their gift of prophecy that I examine at present, if it be strictly limited to the knowledge of future things. My design is to discern whether the writings, which are left us by the evangelists and apostles, be divine and inspired. And to succeed in this inquiry, I begin by supposing what is certain, that Christ wrote nothing, and that we should neither know what he did or said, but by means of his disciples. Upon this I ground this plain reasoning: either the doctrine of Christ, and the knowledge of his mysteries, have been preserved as pure as if the church had immediately received them from himself, and he had dictated those scriptures which contain them; or they have been altered in some regards, lost their first purity, and by consequence their certainty, by passing through the mouths of the apostles.

Supposing the first; the scriptures must undoubtedly be divine, because they have all the authority of Christ himself, and have been directed by his light and spirit.

But upon the second supposition, they would have been altered by a mixture of the spirit of man with the spirit of God: whereby they would no longer serve me as a sure rule, either of faith or manners; for I should fear with reason to take for divine what was not: and as I should have no sure criterion to distinguish by, I should be forced to distrust them all, and thereby they would become useless to me.

By a necessary consequence, all that Christ came to do in the world, and all he designed to teach us, would become intirely uncertain, because the scriptures, which

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kept the depositum of faith, would be rendered doubtful. Thus all the mystery of his incarnation would vanish. And whereas we might have said before his coming, the * Messiah will tell us all things, and resolve all our doubts in regard of religion; we ought to say after his ascension into heaven, that he multiplied our uncertainty, by suffering all divine verities to be obscured in the world; and that he has even destroyed all possibility of our ever being infallibly satisfied, because after him we have neither a new master or interpreter to look for, and the church can never be more enlightened than the apostles, nor more sure of those truths she has received by their channels, which are supposed thus weakened.

There would be thus an extreme difference betwixt the scriptures of the Old Testament, which are manifestly inspired, tho' they contain but promises and figures, and those of the New, which would have been abandoned to human fallibility, tho' the latter contain what God has wrought of a most miraculous nature for mankind, what is essential to religion and salvation, and is to subsist to the end of ages. And the heavenly Father, who has regulated by his Spirit all the expressions of the prophets who foretold his Son, would have only employed human wisdom and reason to preserve the doctrine of his church, and the mysteries of his Son, who is made the high priest of future blessings, and the Mediator of the everlasting covenant.

It will be answered, perhaps, that there is a medium betwixt the two extremes, because the scriptures of the New Testament may be certain without being divine, and the truths taught by Christ may have been preserved without mixture or alteration, though they were not inspired.

But without contesting at present what is here advanced, I ask how I can be sure of that? There may be, you say, a medium betwixt the two extremes. I will suppose it for a moment. But mere possibility is not the object of christian faith. Its character is not only to be certain, but immutable; and by consequence, its
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* John. iv. 25.

object ought to be so. The apostles might have preserved, you will say, the doctrine of Christ in its perfect purity, without any other succour but that of reason and memory: they might have done so, but have they done it? or if they have done it, can they then have given me such certain proofs that I cannot doubt of it? when I find expressions that are difficult and contrary in appearance to one another, when the greatest truths are in question, and I must answer heretics that will misconstrue a word or a syllable, shall I be confirmed in my faith, by endeavoring to persuade myself that men who followed nothing but a natural light, have written not a title but divine truth?

A R T. III.

*Second proof. * Jesus Christ not only communicated his authority to the apostles, but likewise his spirit and wisdom; without which his authority would have been useless.*

IT was not in this manner Jesus Christ constituted his apostles * masters over the whole world. When he commissioned them to instruct all nations, he communicated to them not only his authority but his divine knowledge and light, without which their mission would have been useless. When he told them on the day of his resurrection, that he sent them as his Father had sent him, he breathed visibly on them, to communicate to them his Spirit; and by substituting them in his place, he gave them wherewithal to supply it with dignity, by discovering to them the depth of scripture, and opening their minds with a supernatural light, to the end they might have a true understanding of them.

By this he gave them the power, not only of saying as the ancient prophets, *Thus says the Lord*, but of holding his place, continuing his work, and speaking in his name. And this is, in effect, what St. Paul says of himself in the name of all the others: † “ Now then, says he “ to the Corinthians, we are ambassadors for Christ, as tho’

* Matth. xxviii. 18. John xx. 21. Luke xxiv. 45.

† 2 Cor. v. 20.

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"tho' God beseech you by us." Never did any of the prophets speak of their ministry in a more august manner, nor bear a more evident testimony of their inspiration. * "We are not, says the same apostle, as many, which corrupt the word of God, but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God, speak we in Christ." This is what fixes the mind, and is the foundation of faith. Otherways we should never know whether the word of God was unmixed or adulterated; whether the revelation comes down to us without mixture, or whether the traditions and fancies of men have altered it? † I willingly listen to a man, who pretends to be a teacher of all nations, only because he is the faithful disciple of truth, of which he takes Christ himself to witness, who elected him to spread his doctrine. And I am not less disposed than the Galatians, ‡ to receive him as an angel, or as Christ himself, because he preaches nothing to me but what Christ himself would preach to me in person, and therefore only supplies his place in my regard by his presence and voice.

For it is proper to observe, that what Christ had begun by his public ministry, the apostles continued after his death, by preaching in Judea, and amongst the Gentiles: that it was the same work, conducted by the same Spirit, and supported by the same power: that there was no difference but in the ministers, and not in the certainty and purity of the doctrine. For otherwise Christ would have left his work imperfect, or have even destroyed it, by substituting successors incapable of maintaining it.

A R T. IV.

Third proof. The apostles have mixed no human doctrine in the gospel.

WHAT confirms me in this belief, is the care the apostles took of adding nothing foreign or human in the preaching of the gospel, and the reasons they

* 2 Cor. ii. 17.

† 1 Tim. ii. 7.

‡ Gal. iv. 14.

they had to do so: for they not only designed to preserve the word of God down to us pure, but would have our faith grounded on it. And they were so far from altering the simplicity of the gospel, that it was on this simplicity they made its efficacy and virtue depend *. I have not employed in speaking and preaching to you, said St. Paul to the faithful, the persuasive words of human reason, but the evident effects of the spirit and power of God: that your faith might not be established on the wisdom of men, but the power of God. Human wisdom, as well as eloquence, is therefore excluded. Divine faith can be founded on neither. Its only foundation is the word of God attested by his power, that is to say, revelation confirmed by miracle. And this is what the same apostle calls the doctrine of the Spirit, because 'tis its divine light that reveals it, and its miraculous power that proves it. † We have not received the spirit of the world, says he, but the Spirit of God, that we may know the gifts which God has given us. This is the source from whence flows the gospel light. And we preach them, ‡ not with those discourses which human wisdom teaches, (it is therefore excluded with its language) but with such discourses as are taught by the Holy Ghost, using in spiritual mysteries only spiritual words. Here is expressly the inspiration of words mentioned; because it is the Holy Ghost who teaches them; for otherways there would be a visible disproportion betwixt the sublime truths he alone can teach, and human words that explain them.

A R T. V.

Fourth proof. They assure us themselves that they were inspired; and they condemn the least doubt on this head.

BUT the care we take to prove by consequences, that the apostles and their discourses were inspired, is not necessary; because they speak it openly, and look upon

* 1 Cor. ii. 4.

† 1 Cor. ii. 13.

‡ Εν διδακτοῖς πνεύματος ἀγίου ὑμῖν. 1 Cor. ii. 13.

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upon the least doubt as a criminal infidelity. "Since ye seek, says St. Paul * to the Corinthians, a proof of "Christ speaking by me." Nothing then could have been more full or general than this. It is Jesus Christ who speaks: St. Paul is but his organ: and if any one doubts, Christ is ready to employ his omnipotency to confound the incredulous.

The same apostle in another place, not only establishes this truth, but likewise the principle on which it is founded. "Who can know, † says he, the thought and "design of the Lord, or who can instruct him? but for "us, we have the knowledge and spirit of Jesus Christ." It is he who thinks in us: it is he, who is our knowledge and understanding. Otherwise how should we be able by our conjectures to discover his sentiments and designs? "There is ‡ only the spirit of man, which knows what "man thinks. Thus none know the mind of God, but "the spirit of God which penetrates all things, even "what is the most profound and hidden." We should expose ourselves to give our own imaginations for his thoughts, if he had not revealed them to us; and therefore by a necessary consequence, we should be in danger, to weaken the divine notions, had not he himself suggested proper expressions.

Wherefore this great apostle fears not to say, that the contempt shewn to his words, falls upon God himself, who has given him his holy spirit; || and it is upon this ground that he assures the Thessalonians, that they were not deceived in listening to his words, as if they were the word of God himself, because in effect they were so: *not as the word of man, but, as it is in truth, the word of God.* § Strong and precise terms, which prove that both the things signified, and the expressions, were of God; and that the same veneration was due alike to both, because they had the same principle.

ART.

* Επει δοκιμὴν ἐτάτε τῷ Ἰησοῦ λαλῶντος Χριστοῦ. 2 Cor. xiii. 3.

† Νῦν Κυρίῳ. 1 Cor. ii. 16.

‡ Ibid. ver. 11 and 10.

|| 1 Thess. iv. 8.

§ 1 Thess. ii. 13.

A R T. VI.

The fifth proof. They compare the truth of their words to the certainty and immutability of those promises, which God is the author, and Christ the voucher of.

IT is for this that the same St. Paul (whom I quote oftener than the rest, but who speaks in the name of all, because 'tis on the same subject) cannot bear being suspected of variation or levity in his words; but he compares them to the promises, which are made us in Christ Jesus, and gives us as a proof of them, the same miracles which attested the verity of the gospel. "Having had the design, says he to the Corinthians, * to see you in my passage to Macedonia, do you think it is out of inconstancy I have not executed it? or when I take a resolution, is it meerly human? is it thus you find yes and no in me? but God, who is my witness, knows there is not yes and no in the discourses I have held to you. "For Jesus Christ the Son of God, who has been preached to you, is incapable of yes and no; being constancy and truth itself: for it is in him, that all the promises of God are † yes and amen, that is to say, certainty and truth."

I know nothing in all the scriptures more strong or majestic, to prove how far the inspiration of the apostles extended, when they wrote, or spoke to the faithful; because those designs which appear arbitrary, and promises which seem to have been only human, were the effect of a supernatural wisdom and light.

And this is what explains to us the cause of that anathema or curse, which St. Paul pronounces not only against false preachers, but against an angel of heaven, that should preach a gospel different from what he had preached, nay even against himself, should he ever vary and change any thing of his first instructions. For being fully persuaded, that he had been only the organ and interpreter of the Holy Ghost in all he had said, and

* 2 Cor. i. 17.

† Εν αὐτῷ τὸ ναὶ, καὶ ἐν αὐτῷ τὸ ἀμὲν.

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† Ibid

in the manner he had said it, he was convinced he could make no change in it, but by an human spirit; and should he have the rashness to do it, he judged his own anathema ought to take place against himself- * "Tho' we should preach to you ourselves, says he, or even an angel from heaven, a gospel different from that you have received, let him be accursed." I have no need of examining this new gospel, it is sufficient that it be new, and should I alter what I have already preached, you are excused from examining my alterations. Call me accursed, when you find I vary; for I am then a man abandoned to my own spirit, and I have no longer an authority over you; and the spirit of God who inspired me with what you have believed, gives you the right of rejecting me as a seducer, and enemy of your faith: "for I declare to you, (these are the terms of the apostle) † that the gospel which I have preached to you is not after man; for I neither received nor learnt it of man, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ."

A R T. VII.

Sixth proof. St. Paul assures us, that the gospel he preached has nothing human, that he received it immediately from Jesus Christ, and that no change is to be made in it; and the same may be said of the other evangelists and apostles.

THERE is in these words a profounder meaning than is commonly thought, and when they are well understood, they spread a great light over the question I treat of. St. Paul unites these three truths: that no change is to be made in the gospel he preached; that this gospel has nothing human; and that it is Christ himself who has revealed it. He proves the first of these verities by the second, and the second by the third. But was not this a personal thing? for might not he have been the only one amongst the apostles, whom Christ taught immediately the divine truths of the gospel without the ministry of men? others saw him act, or heard

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* Gal. i. 8.

† Ibid. v. 11. & 12.

his discourse, or were witnesses of his miracles; and in this sense they might be said not to have learnt the gospel but from him alone. But they discover to us themselves with a wonderful candor, that they did not attentively observe the actions of Christ, tho' very public; and that they imperfectly understood his discourses tho' plain, and without parables. What security can we then have, that they were never deceived? who will answer for the fidelity of their memories, especially in regard to long discourses, so sublime, and full of mysteries, such as those which St. John relates. And who can assure us that all is sincere, and most scrupulously exact, error being sometimes so near truth, that one word more or less may be of infinite consequence? besides the time that past betwixt the events and their history was so considerable, that they possibly by mistake might have omitted, or added several things of importance.

How could we say in such a case, that the gospel being so preached, would have nothing in it of man, when on the contrary, it would have nothing but human on the side of the preachers? why might not their writings have been subject to variation, correction, supplement, &c, these being the characteristics of human performances? and how should a just curse have been pronounced against those who pretended to have had a more faithful memory, an exacter attention, or a more enlightened understanding, and grounded their alterations on one of these principles? St. Paul would thus have been the only apostle who had preached an unalterable gospel; nay, this privilege might have been disputed with him, if the gospel had been revealed to him, and the manner of preaching it entrusted to his reason, and natural memory.

It is therefore evident in the first place, that we must judge of the evangelists and the other apostles by St. Paul; because his person is not concerned, but the very foundation of religion, and the immutable certainty of the gospel: and secondly, that we ought to acknowledge in them all an immediate revelation independent of all human means, and a supernatural application of the revealed truths on those occasions, wherein they were necessary. This is what Christ had promised in
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express terms to his apostles ; and it would be a visible impiety to doubt of his having accomplished his promise in its full extent. " The Comforter, says he, " which is the Holy Ghost, whom my Father will send " in my name, will teach you all things, and bring " all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have " said unto you *." And in the same discourse, " How- " beit, when the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide " you into all truth : for he will not speak from him- " self ; but he will speak all that he has heard : and " he will reveal to you things to come ; it is he who " will glorify me †." Inspiration could not be promi- sed in a more general and express manner, the gift of prophecy is included, but only as a part of the whole. And so true it is, that the Holy Ghost was the internal master of the evangelists and apostles, that it is to him Christ attributes their preaching. " It is he, says he, " who will glorify me." And to reascend to the first source of all truth and infallibility, Christ adds, that the Holy Ghost will not speak, but what he has heard ; so immutable and divine is the verity of the gospel !

Thus when St. Peter speaks of the epistles of St. Paul, he compares them to the antient scriptures, whose inspiration was indubitable, and acknowledged by all. " There are, says he, some places in his epistles diffi- " cult to understand, and which fickle and ignorant " men pervert to a bad end, and abuse, as they do o- " ther scriptures to their own ruin .†"

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A R T.

* John xiv. 26.

† John xvi. 13.

‡ 2 Pet. iii. 16.

A R T. VIII.

Seventh proof. It is essential to the true religion to be of divine original: it is essential to the scriptures, which are its depositaries, to be divine: and lastly, essential to its founders to be inspired. Had they not declared themselves such, they would not deserve attention. Certainly that the scriptures of the New Testament are not altered.

SOME will perhaps object, that I lay too great a stress upon what the apostles and evangelists say of themselves, and that we ought to have some farther proof than their bare testimony, to believe them inspired.

I agree, that their simple testimony, separate from all that may strengthen its truth, is not sufficient; but I have demonstrated, methinks, that we ought to look on them as sincere, and as uniting in their persons, all the qualities which deserve confidence and respect: thus when they declared themselves inspired, all presumptions are in their favor, and we ought to have very strong reasons to doubt their veracity. We shall see hereafter, that they support by glorious miracles the truth of their discourse, and sublimity of their ministry. But it was not necessary for me to wait for this proof, in order to examine into the reality of their inspiration. This is the natural place of my present inquiry, which would have interrupted the thread of the subject, if it had been deferred. And I am very glad, independently of all that demonstrates it, to have discovered, that the canonical writers of the New Testament attribute so manifestly to themselves a divine inspiration. For they would have been suspected by me, had they not claimed it, or had they spoke dubiously; and I should have believed them less, had they been more modest or timid.

It is essential to true religion to be divine: and it is essential by consequence to the scriptures, which preserve its depositum and tradition, to be also divine:
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these two points necessarily depend on the inspiration of those who first preach the true religion, and establish it by writing. I conclude therefore with certainty, that if the christian religion be true, the apostles and evangelists, who were the first teachers of it, must have been inspired, that they must have known it, and that they ought to have said so: any other conduct would have inclined me not to listen to them. For tho' it be not certain, that he who attributes to himself inspiration, is truly inspired: it is yet certain, that he who is not inspired, cannot be the founder of a divine religion.

Whatever therefore will serve to prove the christian religion, will likewise prove the divinity of the scriptures, which are its foundation: and their divinity being thus once established, will not only dispense with our examining whether they have been preserved pure down to us, but will make us look upon a simple doubt on this point as a fault, and injurious to divine providence, which would have suffered the source of truth to be corrupted, and thus destroyed the very means it had chosen of preserving it.

End of the First Volume.

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